Space Interferometry

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Overview

Overview

- Introduction and Historical Background
- Interfere-o-what?
- Science Motivations and Potential Missions

Objectives and Outcomes

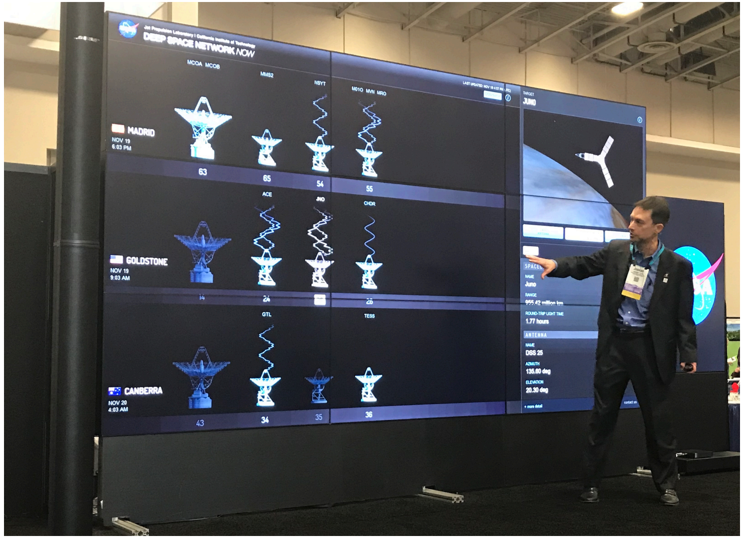
- Heuristic understanding of interferometry
- Appreciation for science motivations and rationale for potential future space missions

Aside

Joseph Lazio

Who?

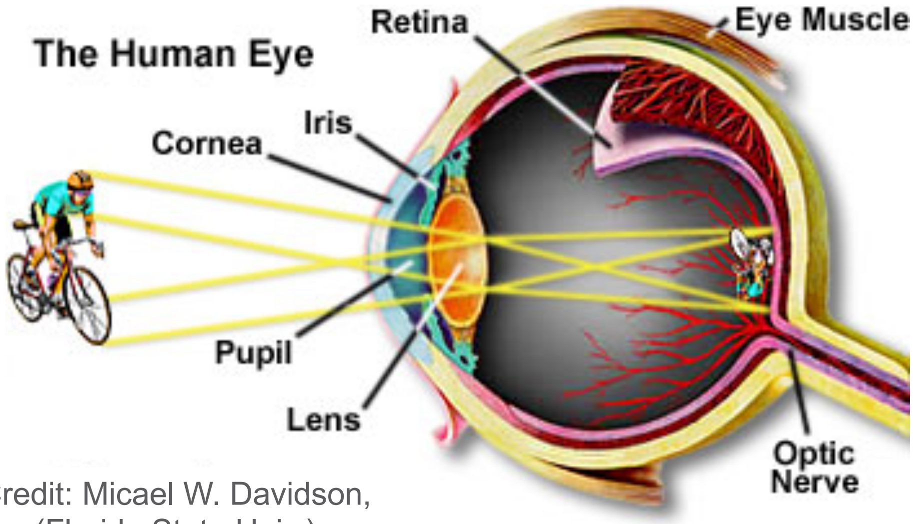
- **Chief Scientist, NASA's Deep Space Network**
- **Boy who always wanted to grow up to be radio astronomer**
- **Involved in early development of Low Frequency Array (LOFAR) and Long Wavelength Array (LWA)**
- **Former Project Scientist for Square Kilometre Array (SKA)**
- **Involved in multiple lunar radio telescope concepts**



Historical Background

Pre-20th Century

Human eye capable of diffraction-limited imaging of about 1 arcminute

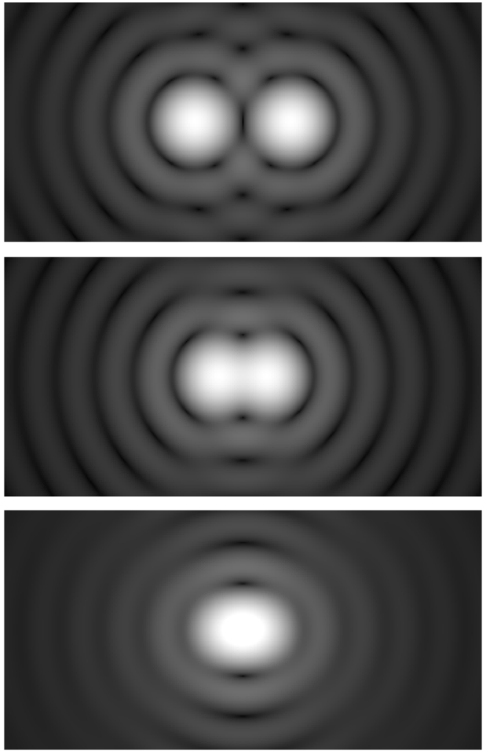


Credit: Micael W. Davidson, (Florida State Univ.)

Modest optical telescopes provide diffraction-limited imaging at 1 arcsecond resolution

Angular Resolution and Optics

Can Two Stars Be Split?



Credit:
Spencer Bliven

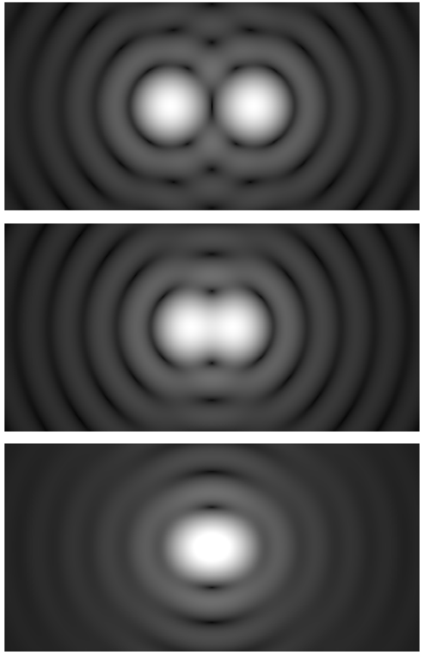
Fundamental optics

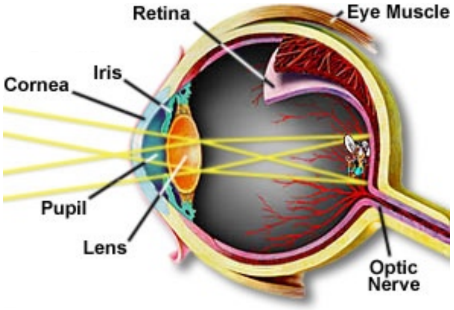
$$\theta = \lambda/D$$

- **λ = observing wavelength**
- **D = diameter of aperture**

Angular Resolution and Optics

Human Eye



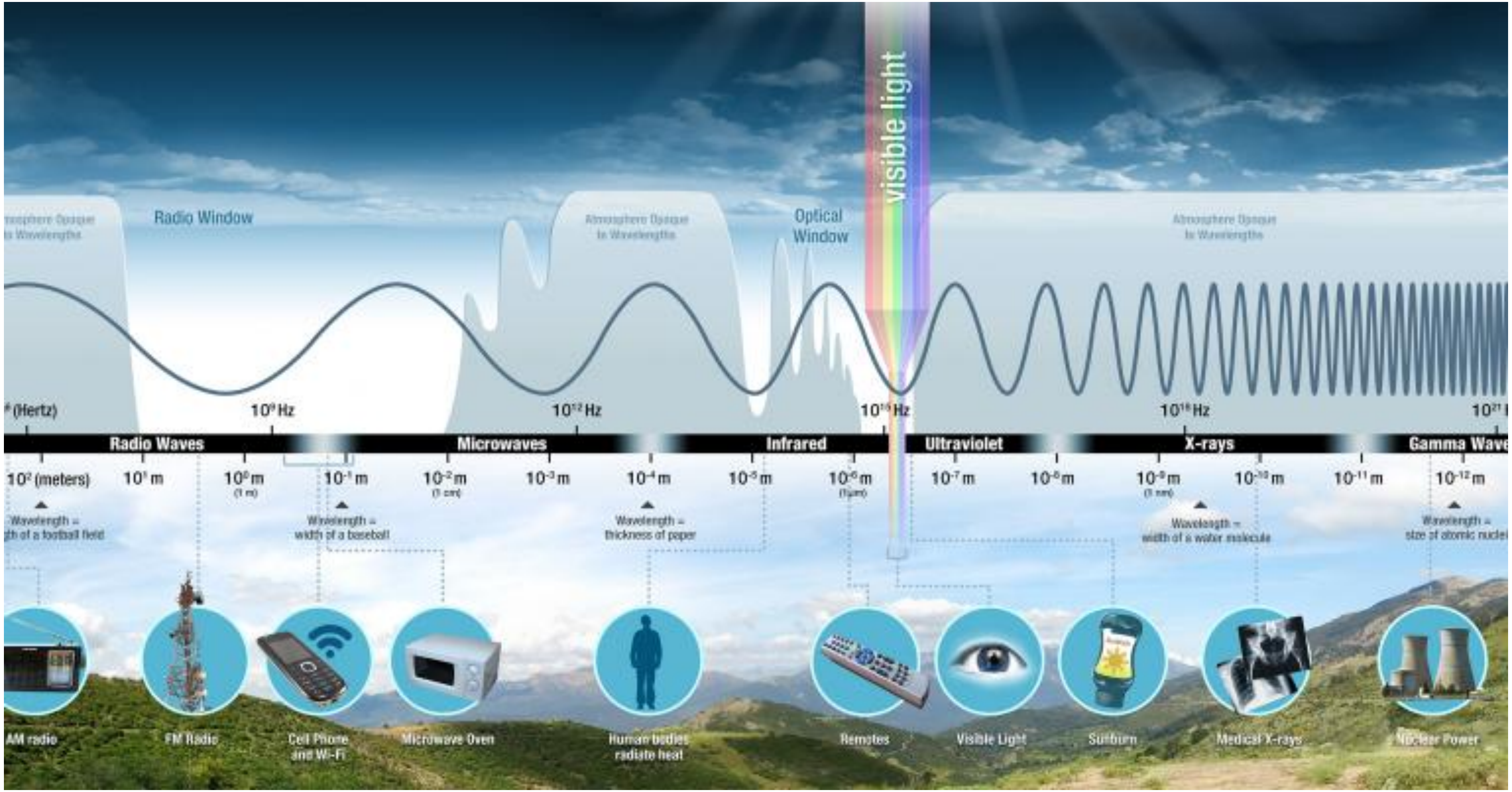


- λ ~ 550 nm (~ 0.00055 mm)
  - observing wavelength
  - yellow light
- D ~ 5 mm
  - diameter of pupil (aperture)

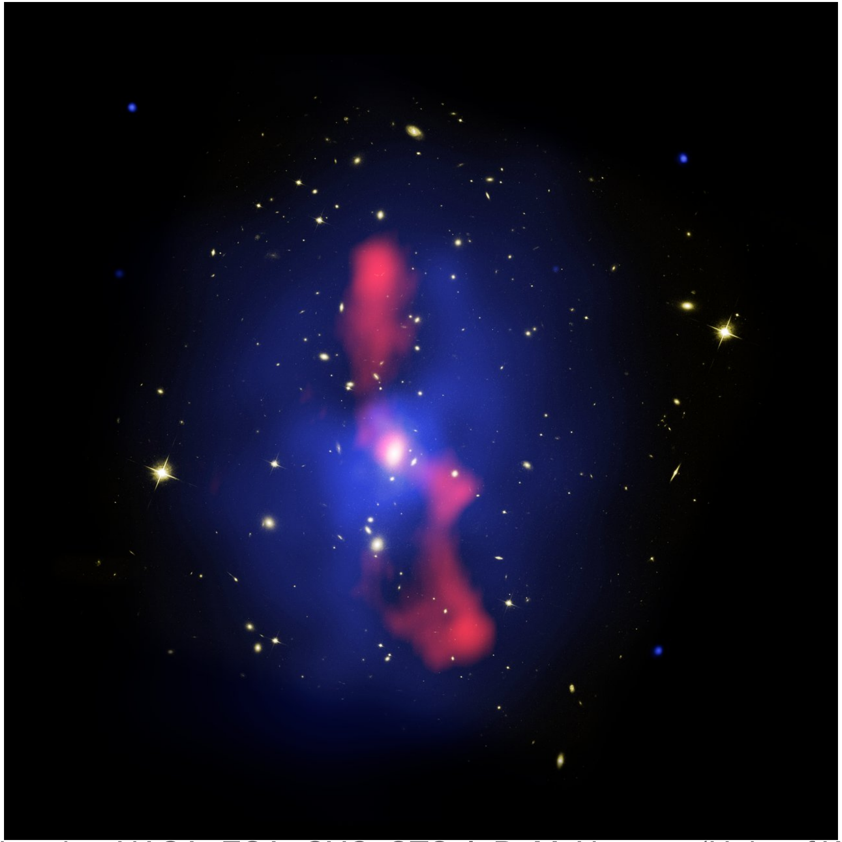
✓ θ ~ 0.00011 radians ~ 0.0063° ~ 0.4 arcminutes

$$\theta = \lambda/D$$

Electromagnetic Spectrum



Full View of the Universe



MS 0735.6+7421

- **Cluster of galaxies**
  - **About 2.6 billion light-years away**
  - **In the constellation Camelopardalis**
- **Three views**
  - **Blue: Chandra X-ray Observatory**
  - **White: *Hubble Space Telescope***
  - **Red: Very Large Array**

Credit:
Hubble and Chandra: NASA, ESA, CXC, STScI, B. McNamara (Univ. of Waterloo)
Very Large Array: NRAO, L. Birzan and team (Ohio Univ.)

Interferometry

Angular Resolution and Optics

Radio Telescopes

- λ ~ 0.30 m (~ 1 GHz)
- D ~ 300 m

  diameter of telescope

➢ θ = 0.001 radians ~ 0.06° ~ 3 arcminutes

$$\theta = \lambda/D$$

! Your eye has higher angular resolution than Arecibo telescope!

Angular Resolution and Optics

Radio Telescopes

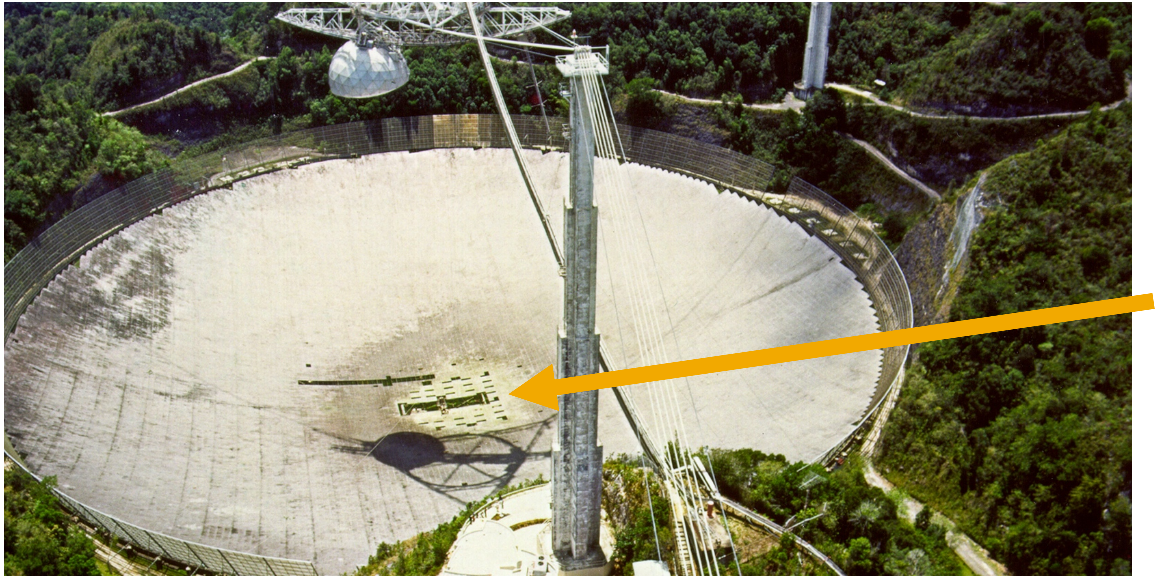
- Arecibo diameter ~ 300 m

?? Match angular resolution of human eye ~ 1 km

?? Match angular resolution of modest visible wavelength telescope ~ 10 km

Angular Resolution and Optics

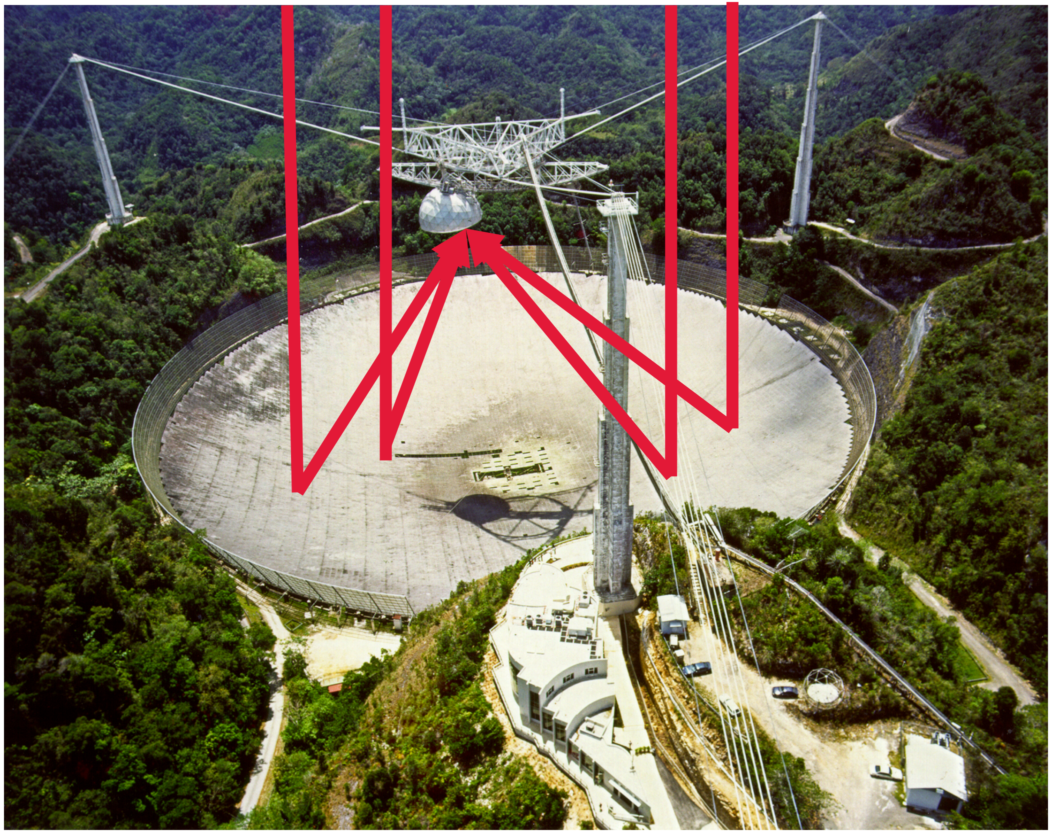
Radio Telescopes



Arecibo has hole in its middle!

How many holes can a telescope have and still work?

How Do Telescopes Work?



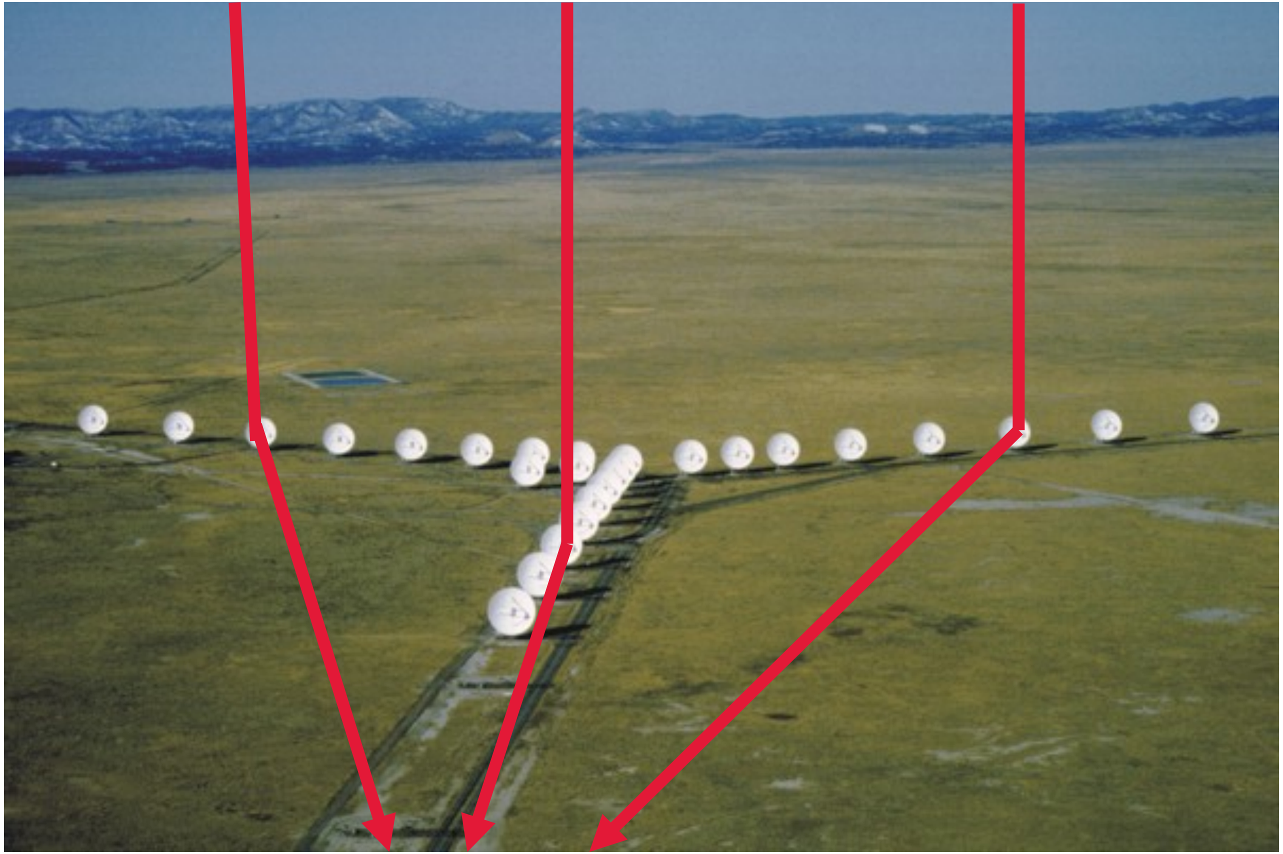
Exercise for the reader:

Consider a parabolic surface.

Show that initially parallel light rays, all traveling at the speed of light *c*, reach a common point, *the focus*, at the same time no matter where they reflect from the surface of the reflector.

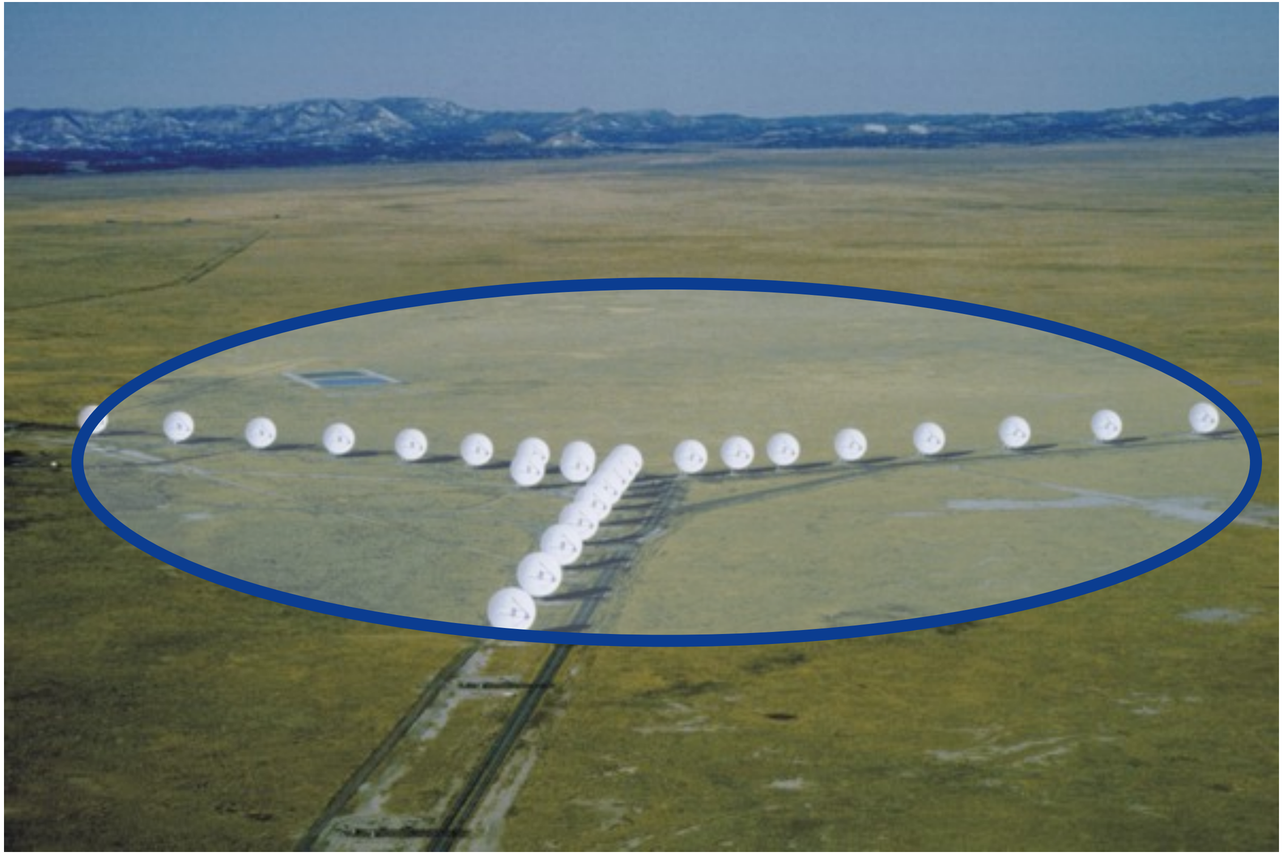
Extra credit: Repeat for a spherical reflector such as Arecibo and show that the focus is a line.

Aperture Synthesis



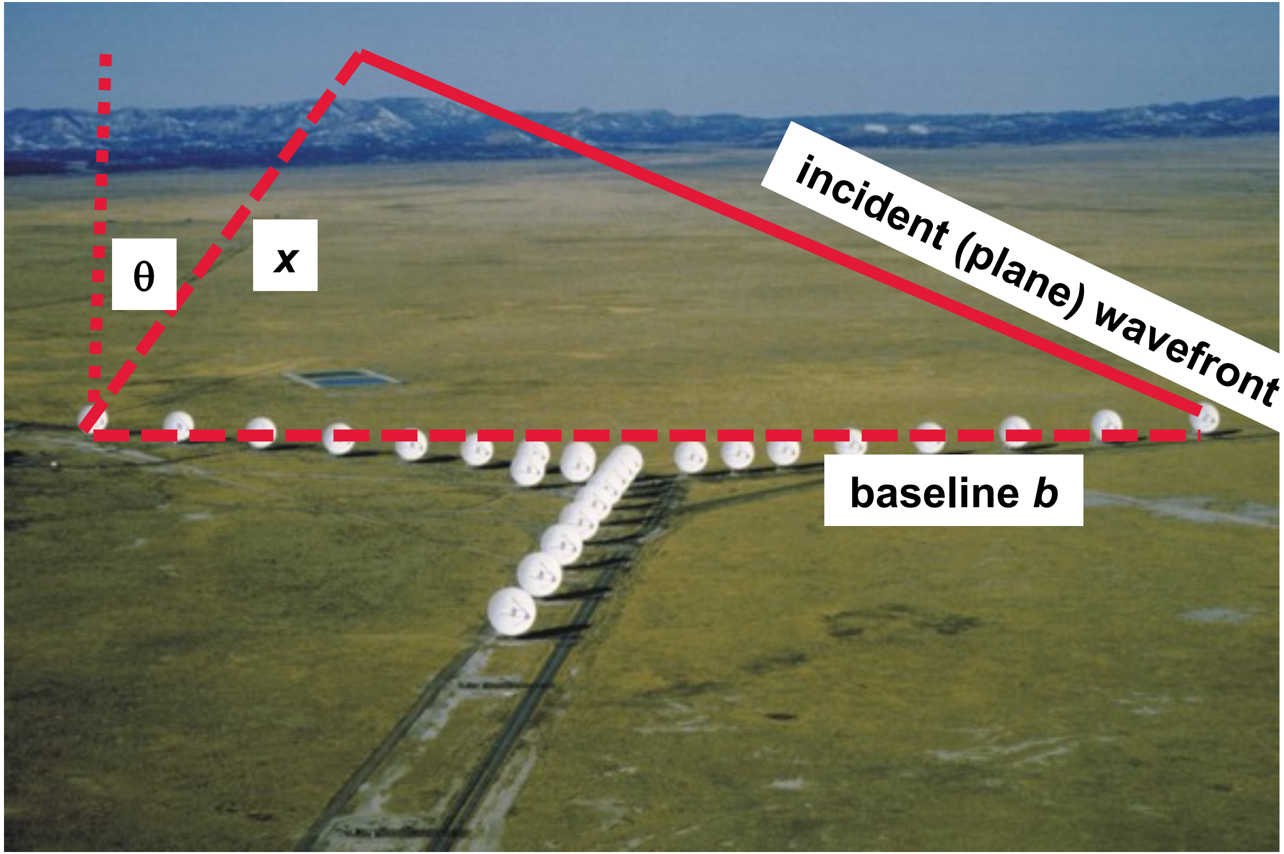
1. Record signals at individual antennas
2. Bring them together "at the same time" (coherently)
3. Then …

Aperture Synthesis



1. **Record signals at individual antennas**
2. **Bring them together "at the same time" (coherently),**
3. **Then synthesize aperture!**

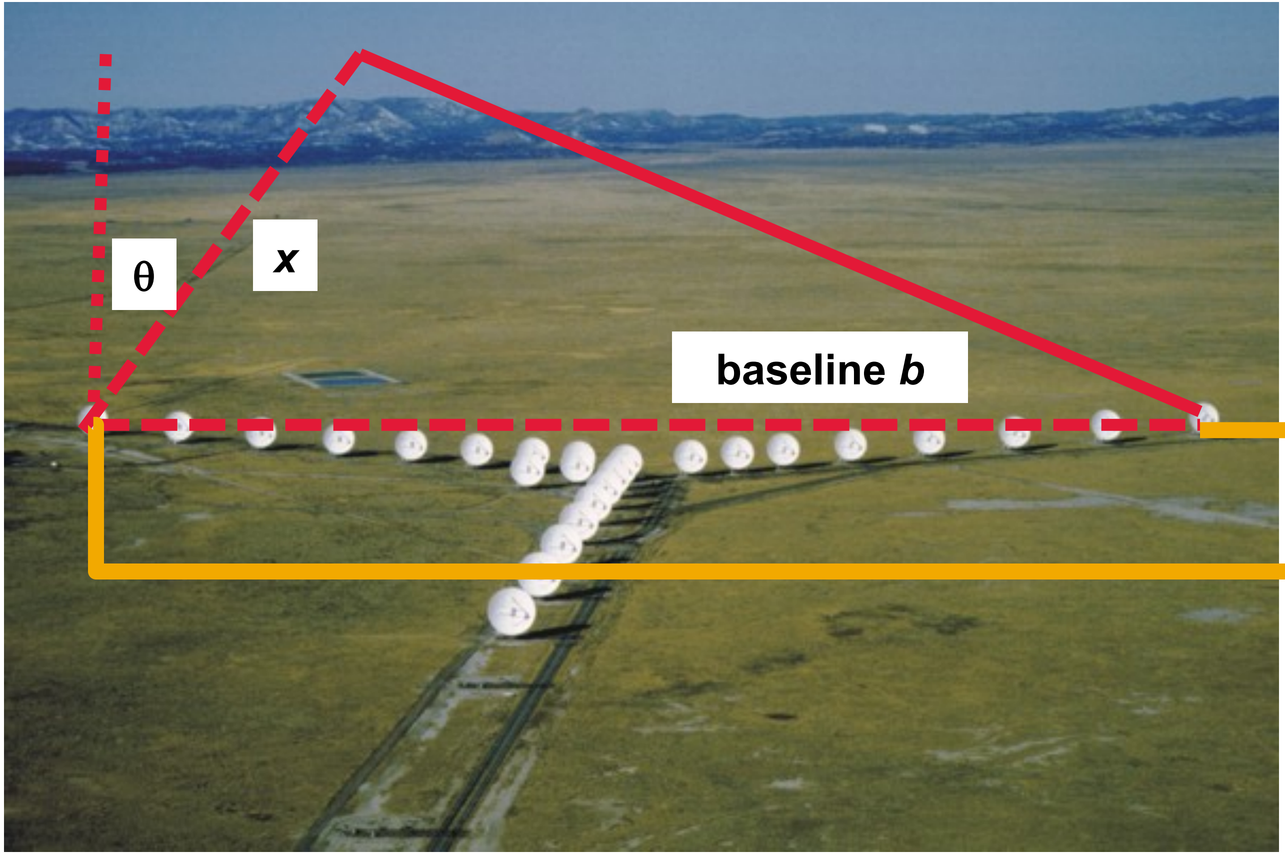
Aperture Synthesis

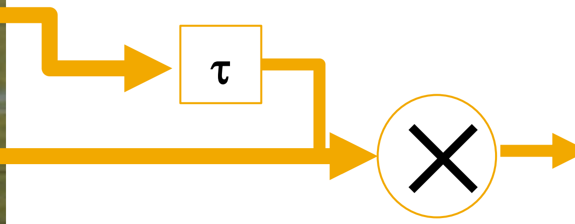


Extra path length:
$x = b \sin\theta$

Geometric delay:
$\tau_g = x/c = (b/c) \sin\theta$

Aperture Synthesis

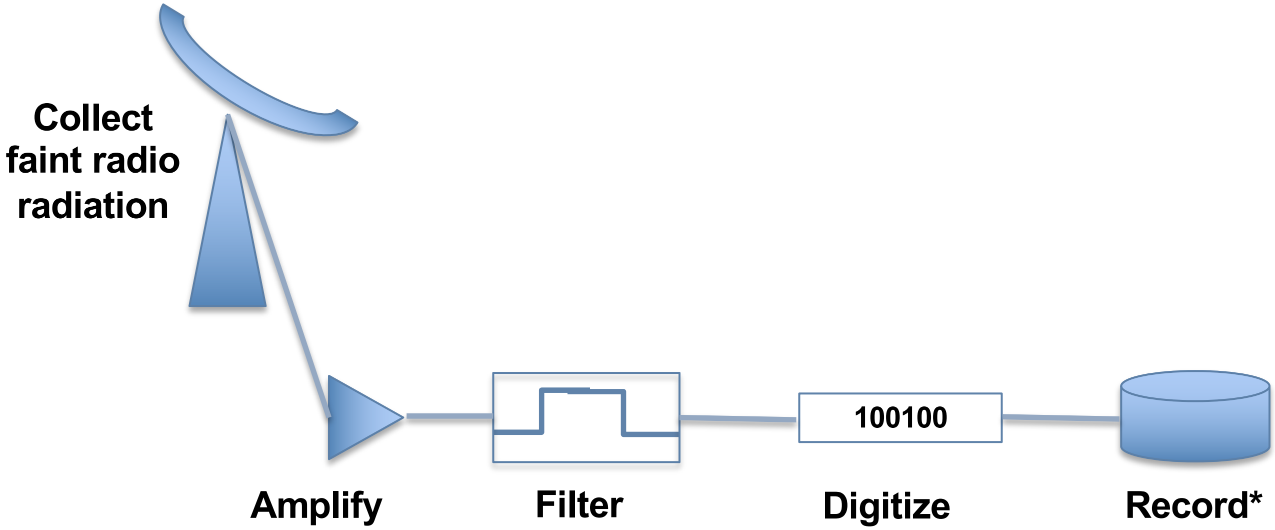




Extra path length:
$x = b \sin\theta$

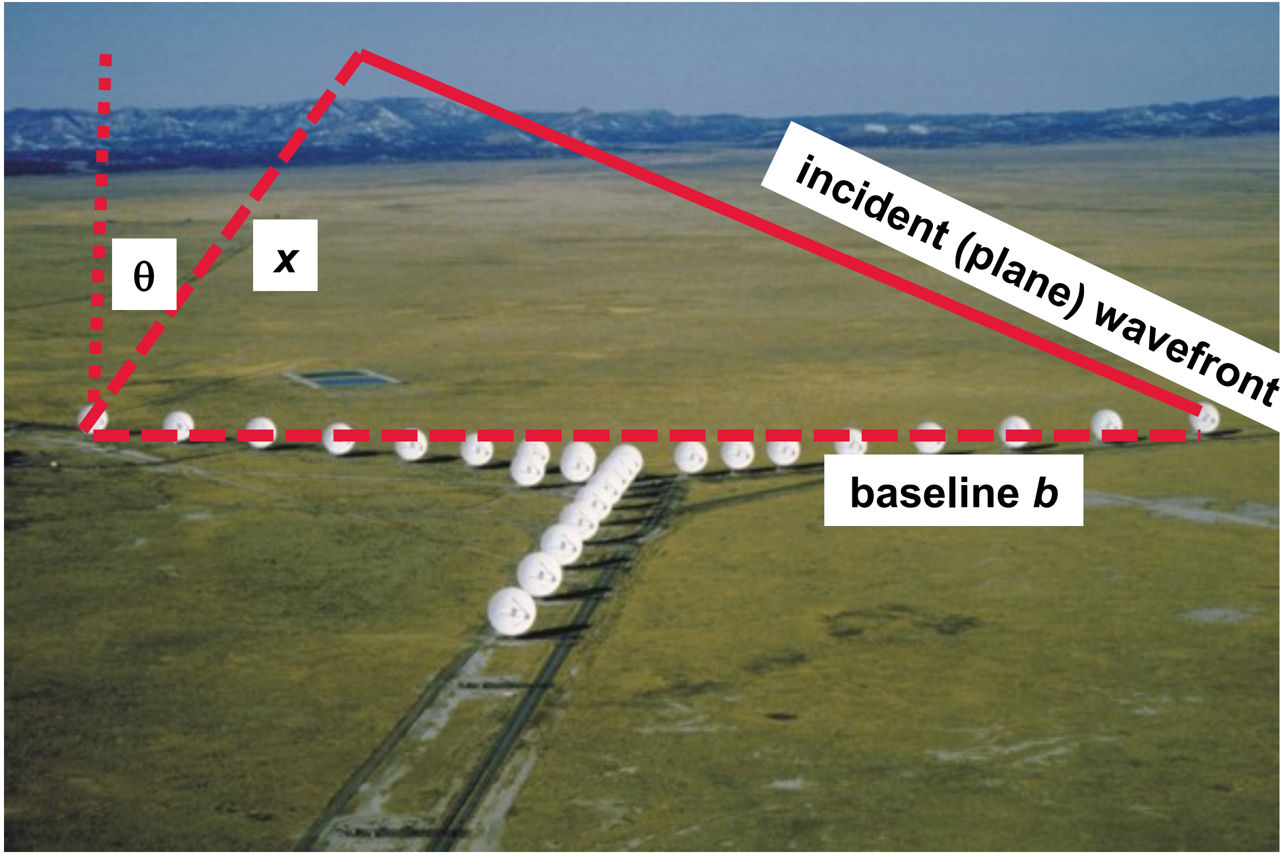
Geometric delay:
$\tau_g = x/c = (b/c) \sin\theta$

Conceptual Radio Telescope



***Today: Record to hard drive disk packs or even direct streaming across the Internet**
Historical note: Record on magnetic tapes, including VHS tapes

Aperture Synthesis

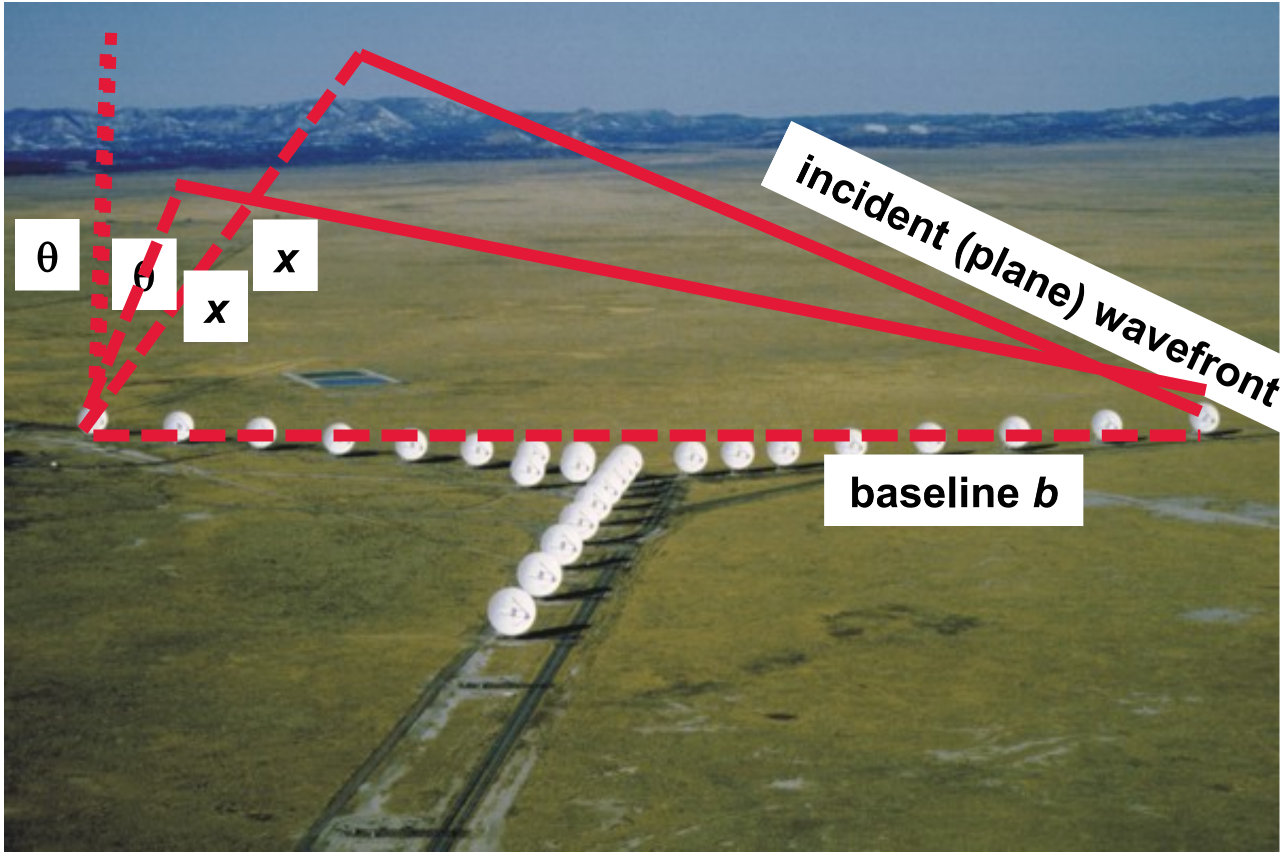


Geometric delay:
$\tau_g = x/c = (b/c) \sin\theta$

Need to know where antennas are

- ➢ ***Knowledge*, not control**
- ➢ **Only *relative* positions**

Earth Rotation Synthesis

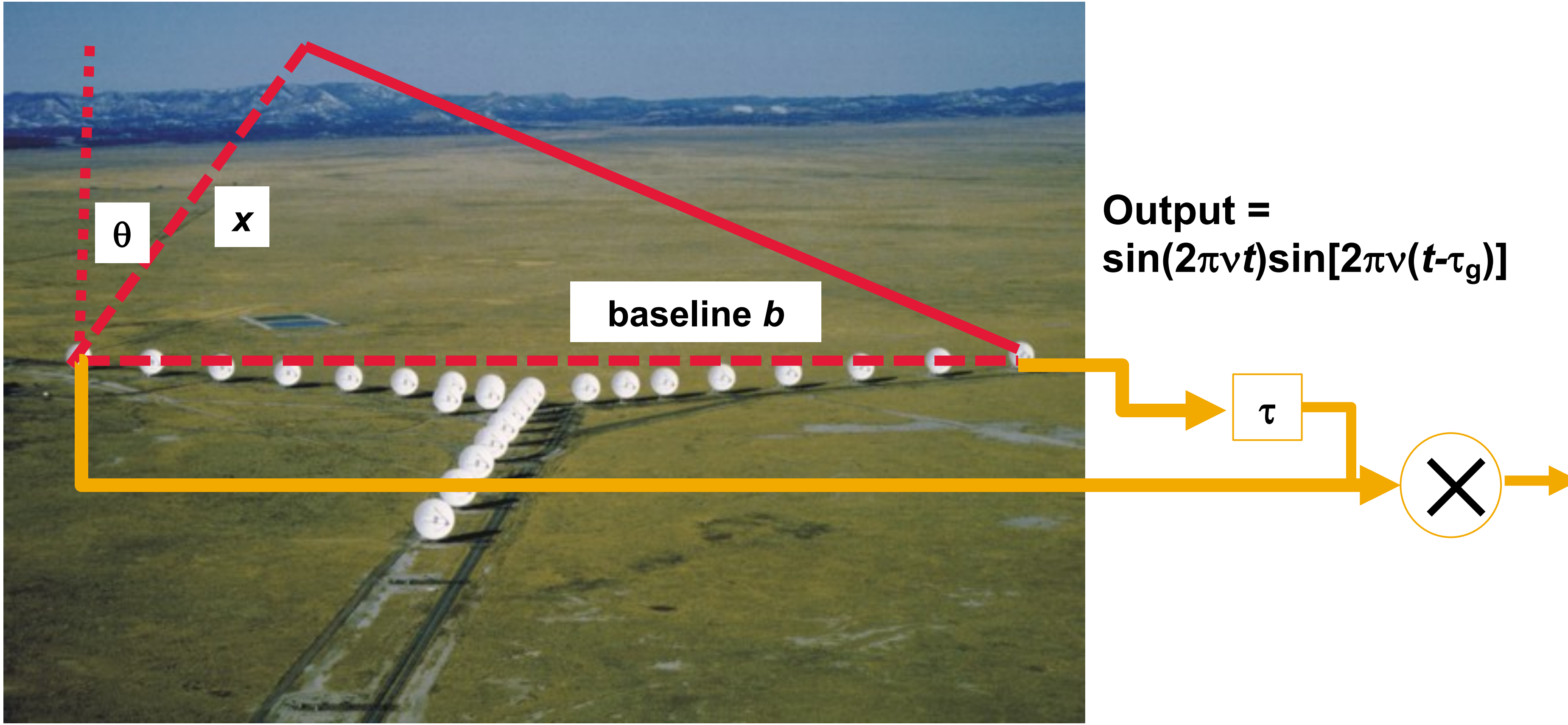


Geometric delay:

$\tau_g = x/c = (b/c) \sin\theta$

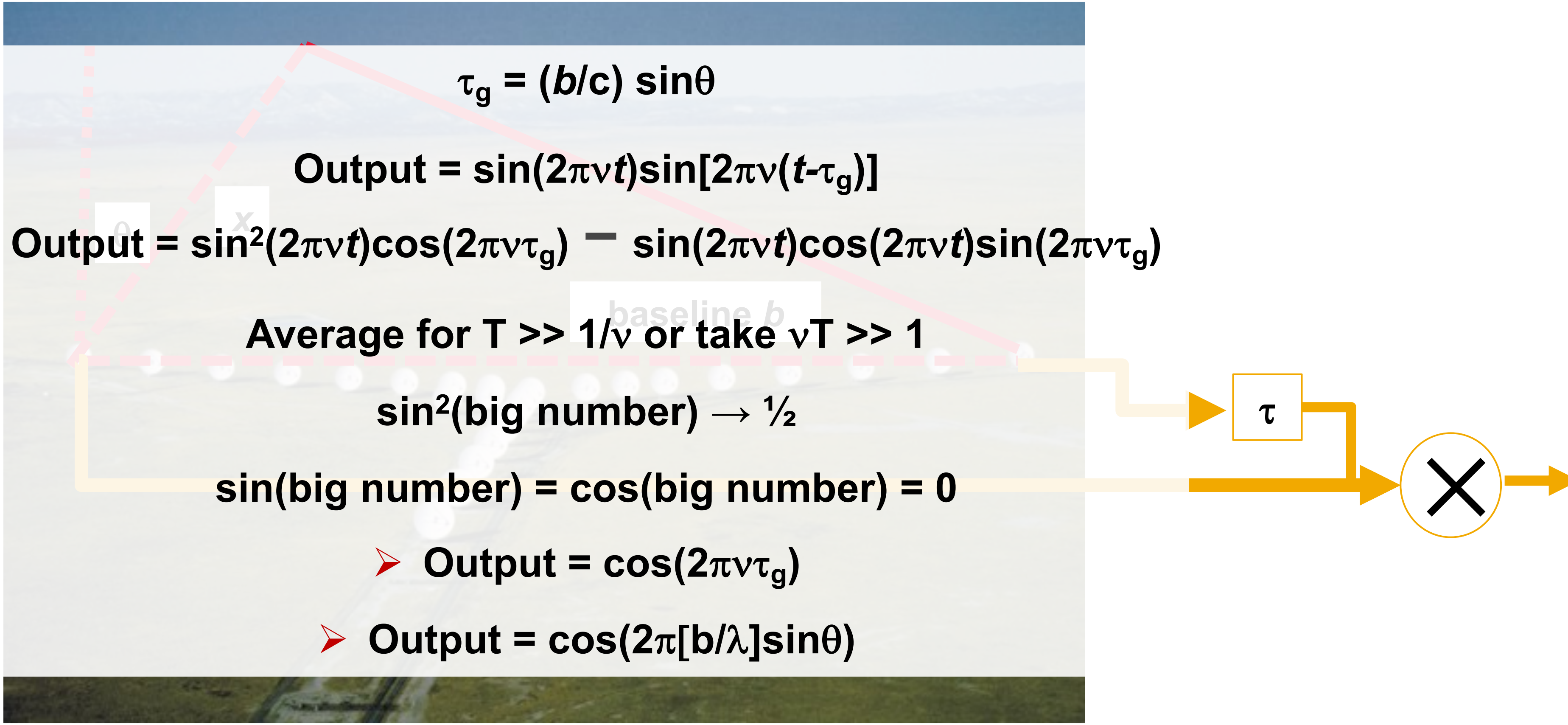
- **From perspective of distant observer, array changes shape**

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals



Output =
$\sin(2\pi\nu t)\sin[2\pi\nu(t-\tau_g)]$

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals



$$\tau_g = (b/c)\sin\theta$$

$$\text{Output} = \sin(2\pi\nu t)\sin[2\pi\nu(t-\tau_g)]$$

$$\text{Output} = \sin^2(2\pi\nu t)\cos(2\pi\nu\tau_g) - \sin(2\pi\nu t)\cos(2\pi\nu t)\sin(2\pi\nu\tau_g)$$

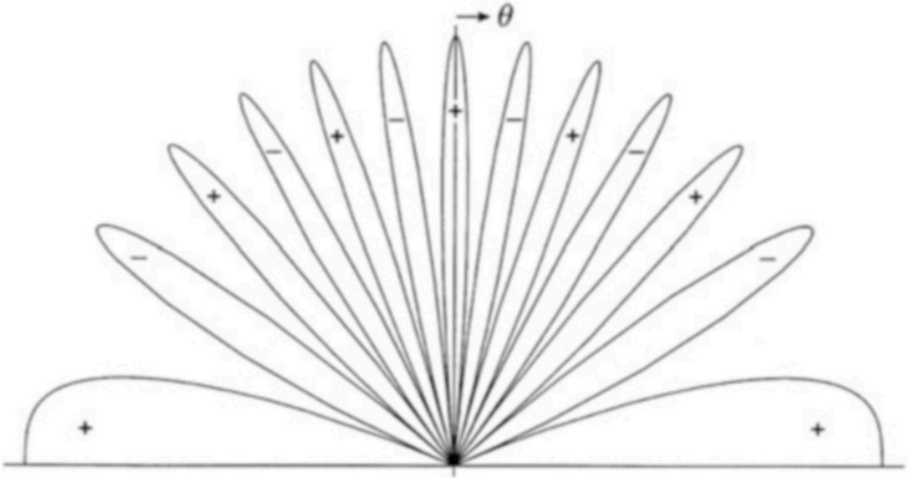
Average for T >> $1/\nu$ or take νT >> 1

$\sin^2$(big number) $\rightarrow$ ½

sin(big number) = cos(big number) = 0

- ➢ Output = $\cos(2\pi\nu\tau_g)$
- ➢ Output = $\cos(2\pi[b/\lambda]\sin\theta)$

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals



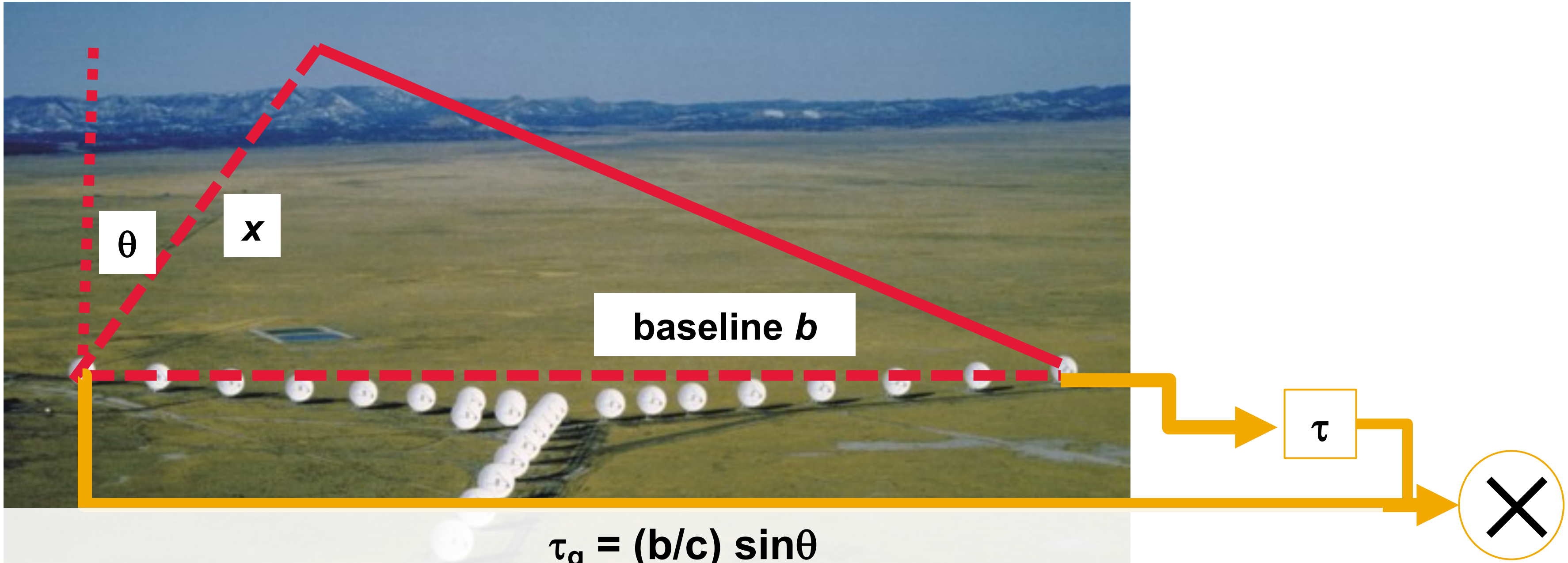
$$\tau_g = (b/c)\ \sin\theta$$

$$\text{Output} = \sin(2\pi\nu t)\sin[2\pi\nu(t-\tau_g)]$$

➢ $\text{Output} = \cos(2\pi[b/\lambda]\sin\theta)$

Thompson, Moran, & Swenson

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals

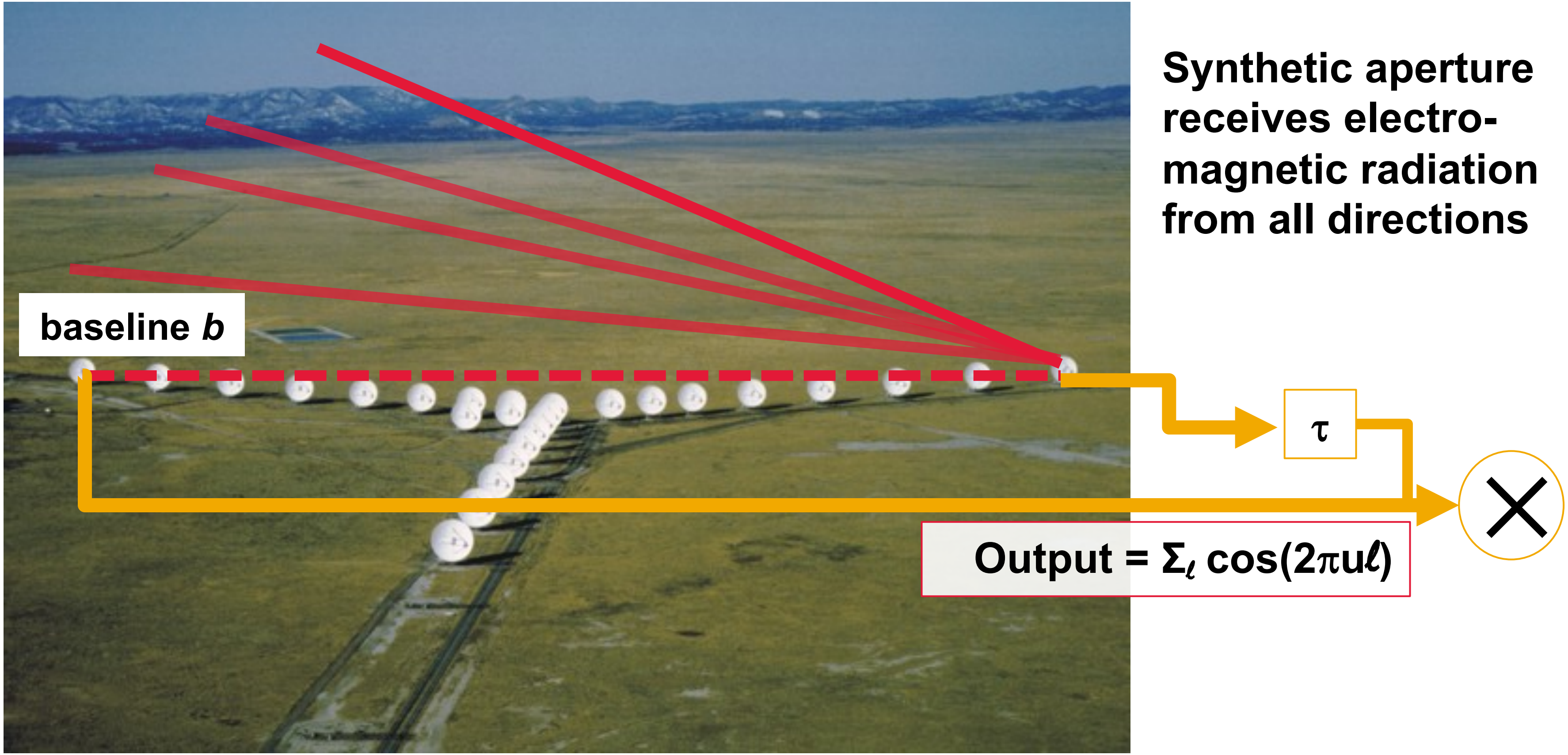


$$\tau_g = (b/c)\sin\theta$$

➢ Output = $\cos(2\pi[b/\lambda]\sin\theta)$

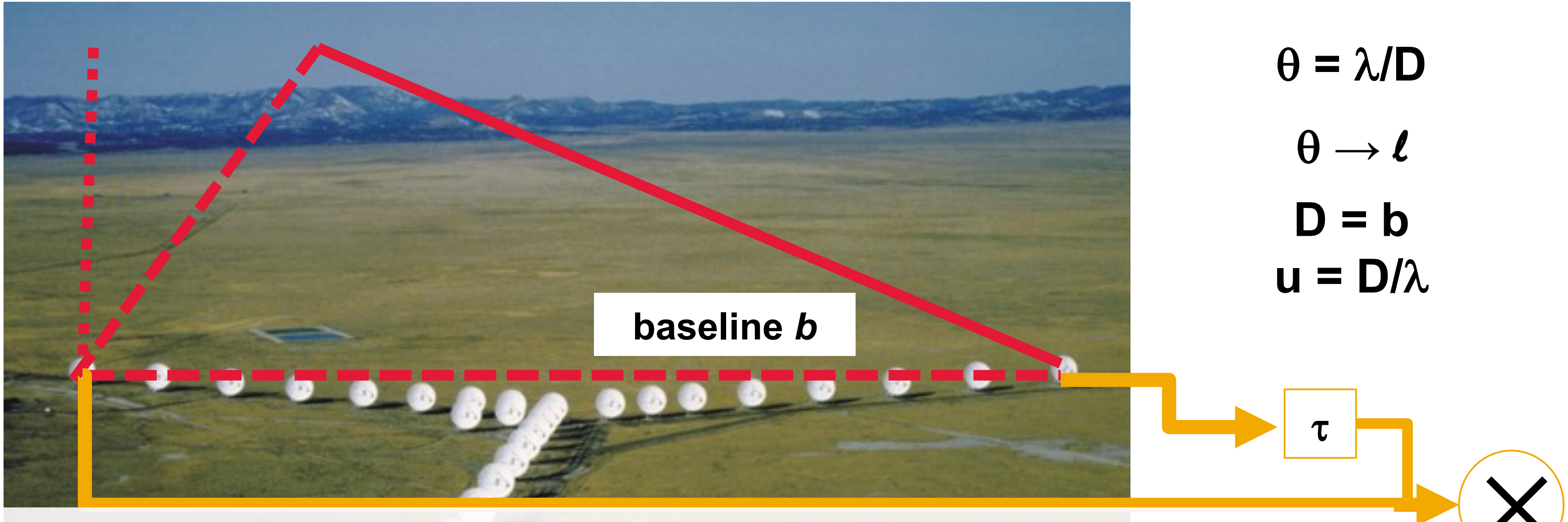
$u = b/\lambda$ and $\ell = \sin\theta$

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals



Synthetic aperture receives electro-magnetic radiation from all directions

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals



$\theta = \lambda / D$

$\theta \rightarrow \ell$

$D = b$

$u = D/\lambda$

- **Output = $\Sigma_\ell \cos(2\pi u \ell)$**

$u = b/\lambda$ and ℓ are Fourier conjugates

- **Big u means small ℓ; small u means big ℓ**

Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals

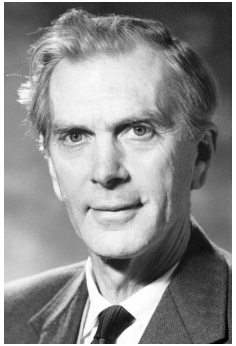
Mid-Term Review

- ✓ **Receptor/antenna separation, measured in wavelengths, is equivalent to aperture diameter.**
  - **True for any optical instrument, not just synthetic apertures**
- ✓ **Baselines (a.k.a. antenna separations) determines angular resolution.**
  - **Distribution of baselines affects performance of synthetic aperture a.k.a. no free lunch theorem.**
- ✓ **Knowledge of relative antenna separations is critical.**

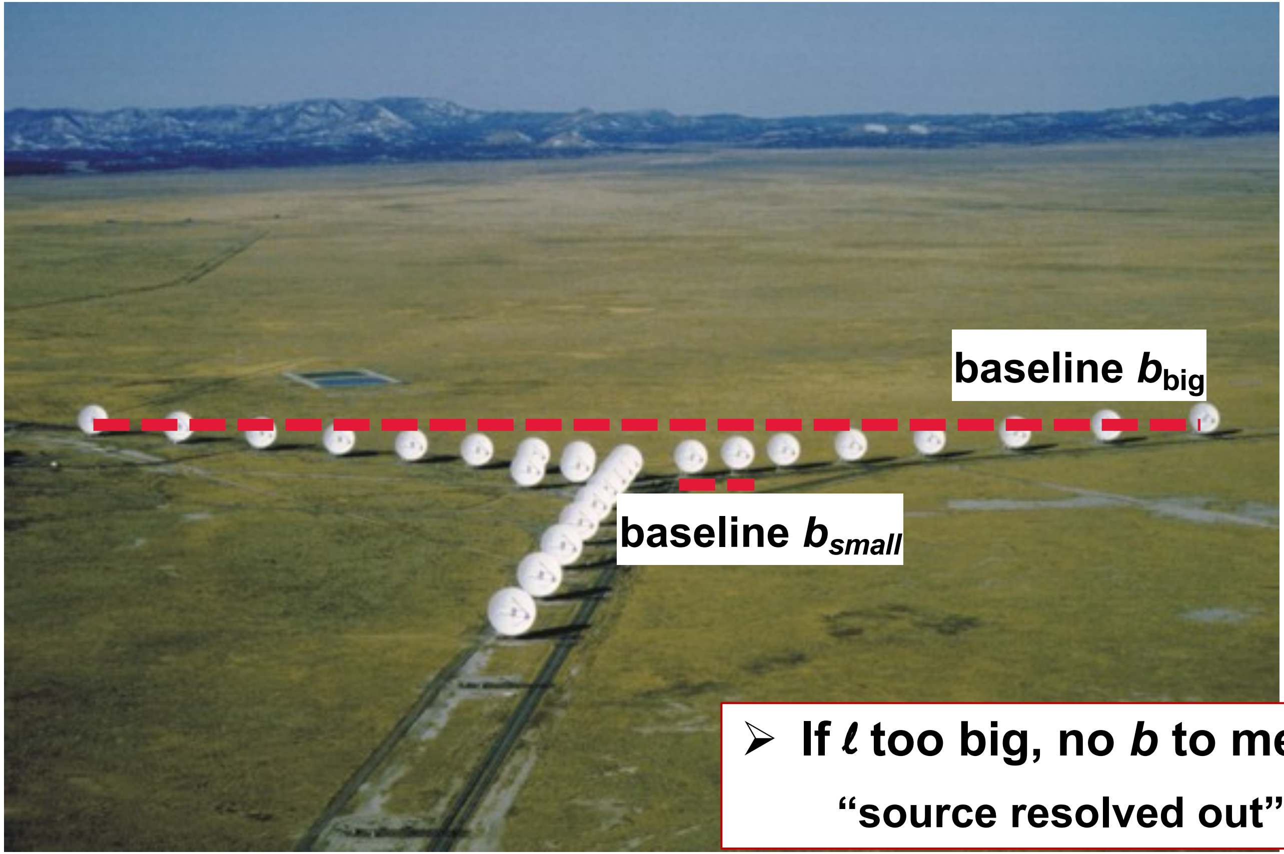
Aperture Synthesis

1974 Nobel Prize in Physics

The Nobel Prize in Physics 1974 was awarded jointly to Sir Martin Ryle and Antony Hewish "for their pioneering research in radio astrophysics: Ryle for his observations and inventions, in particular of the aperture synthesis technique, *and Hewish for his decisive role in the discovery of pulsars.*"



Aperture Synthesis Fundamentals



$\theta = \lambda/D$

✓ Big u (or large *b*) means small ℓ

- Small u (or small *b*) means big ℓ

Whoa!

➢ If ℓ too big, no *b* to measure it!
"source resolved out"

Van Cittert-Zernike Theorem

$$\Gamma(u,v) = V(u, v) = \overbrace{\int I(\ell, m)e^{-2\pi i(u\ell + vm)}\, d\ell dm}^{\text{Fourier Transform}}$$

Mutual coherence function
a.k.a.
Visibility function

Sky brightness

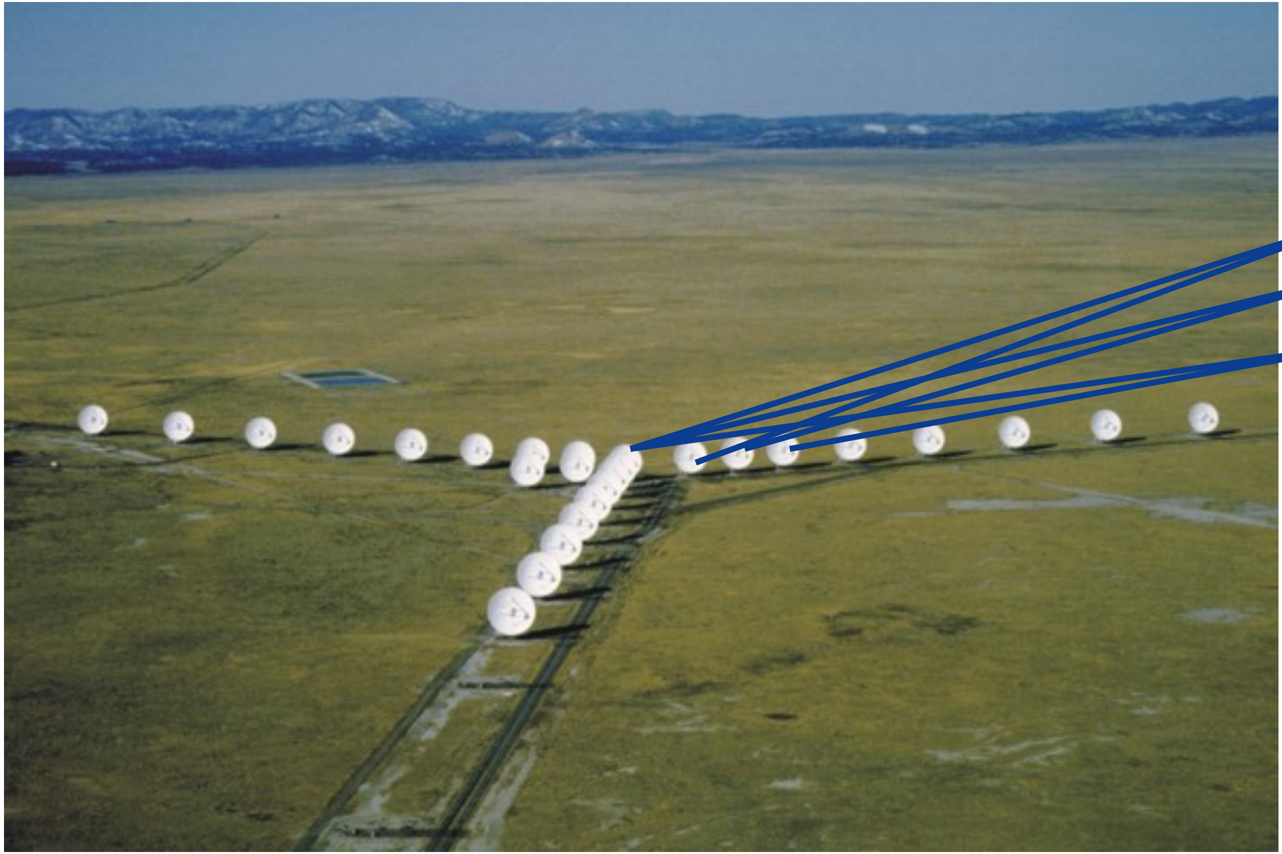
Van Cittert-Zernike Theorem

$$\Gamma(u,v) = V(u, v) = \int I(\ell, m)e^{-2\pi i(u\ell + vm)}\, d\ell dm$$

Assumptions

- Narrow field of view
- Co-planar array
- Monochromatic signals (narrow bandwidths)
- Instantaneous signal reception

Aperture Synthesis



$\Gamma_{12}(u, v)$

$\Gamma_{13}(u, v)$

$\Gamma_{14}(u, v)$

.

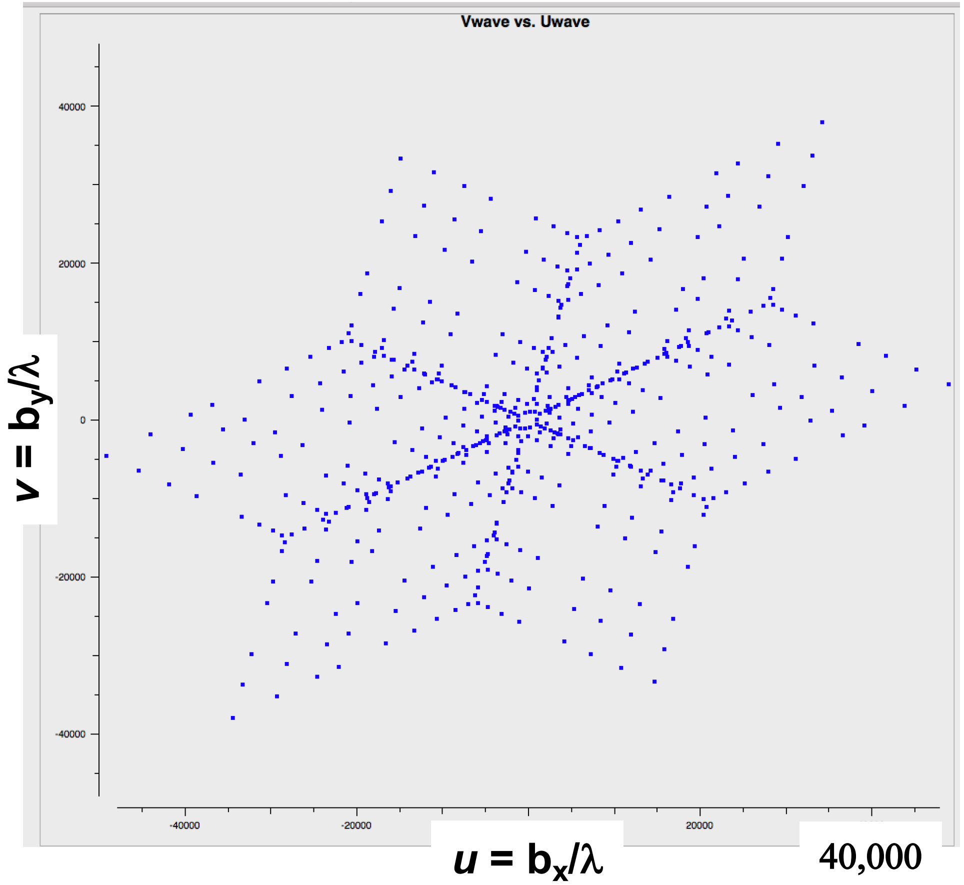
.

.

$\Gamma_{ij}(u, v)$

$$I(\ell, m) = FT[\Gamma(u, v)]$$

Visibilities, *u-v* Plane, (Synthesized) Beams



u = 40,000
b_x = 40,000λ

λ ~ 6 cm (~ 5 GHz)

b_x ~ 2.4 km

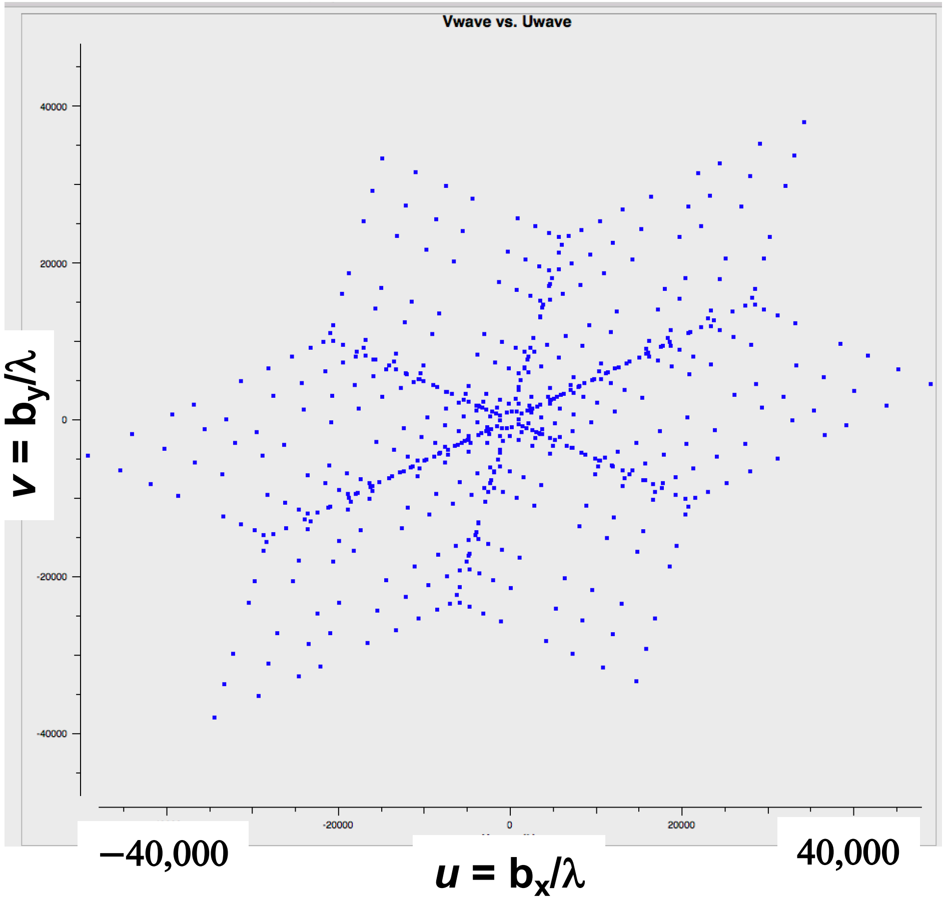
Aperture is 2.4 km in size!

Resolution ~ 5"

Remember where we started?!

jpl.nasa.gov

Visibilities, *u*-*v* Plane, (Synthesized) Beams

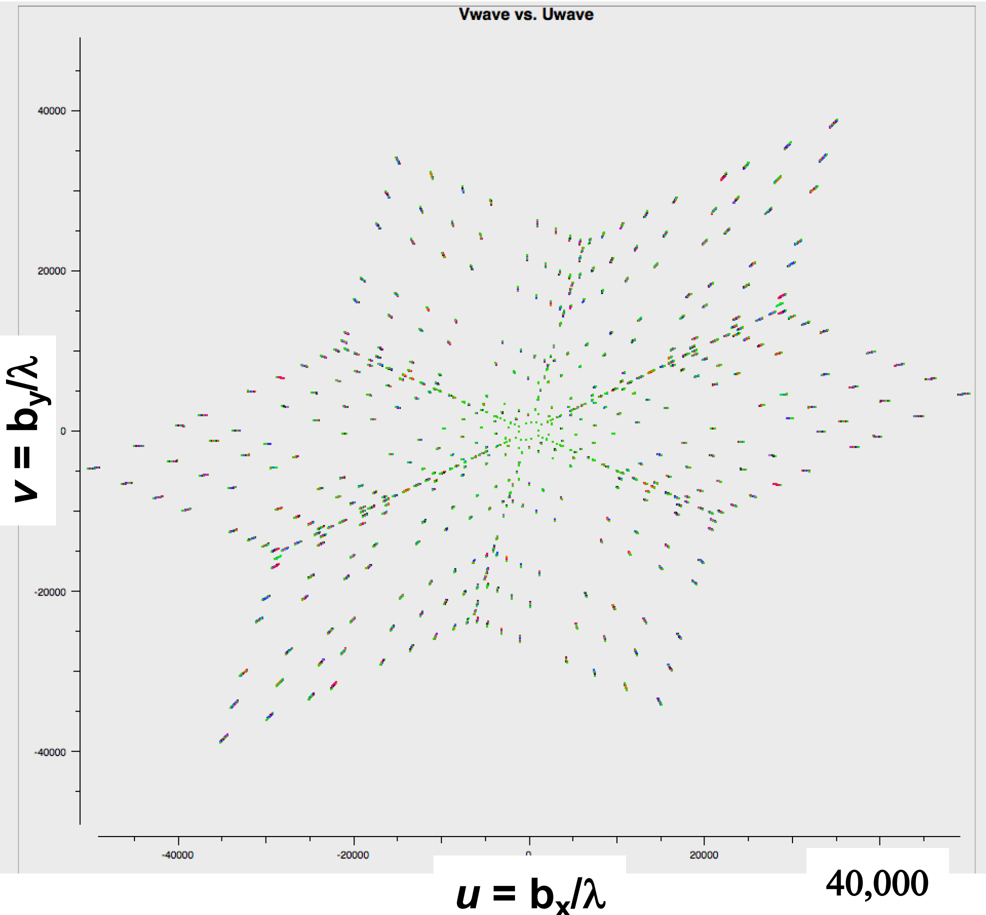


$I(\ell, m) = \mathrm{FT}[\Gamma(u, v)]$

Sky brightness I(ℓ, m) is real quantity

$\Gamma(u, v) = \Gamma^{*}(u, v) = \Gamma(-u, -v)$

Visibilities, *u*-*v* Plane, (Synthesized) Beams

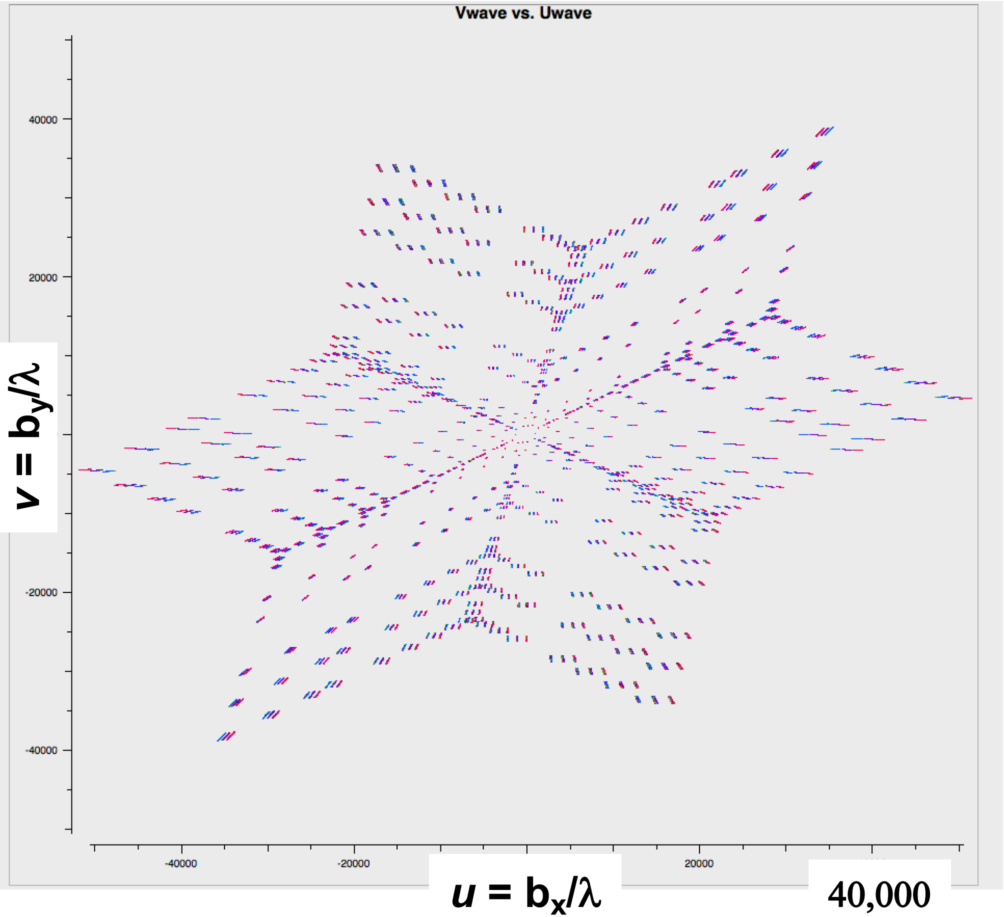


$u = b_x/\lambda$

Sample range of λ or ν, get range of (*u*, *v*)

- ➢ **Fill in synthetic aperture**

Visibilities, *u*-*v* Plane, (Synthesized) Beams



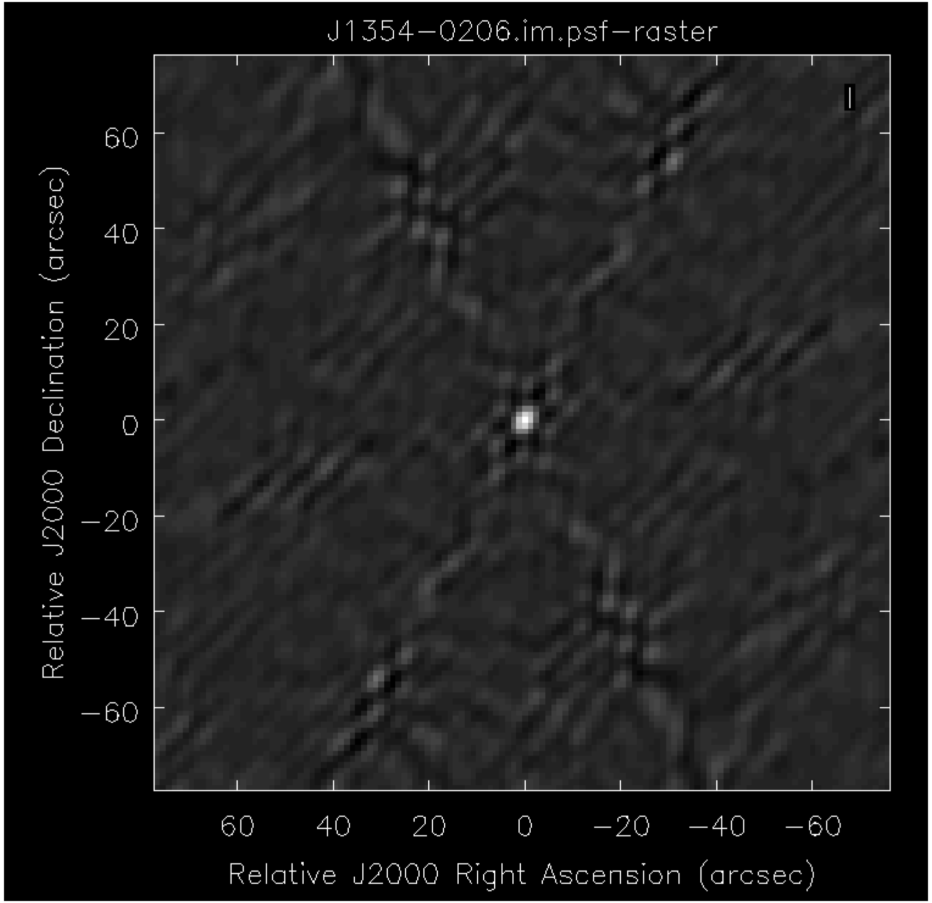
$u = b_x/\lambda$

Baselines change as Earth rotates, $b = b(t)$

Sample over range of time, get range of (u, v)

- **Fill in synthetic aperture**

Visibilities, *u*-*v* Plane, (Synthesized) Beams



$\Pi(u, v) = 1$ if measured
$\Pi(u, v) = 0$ if not measured

Beam = FT[$\Pi(u, v)$]

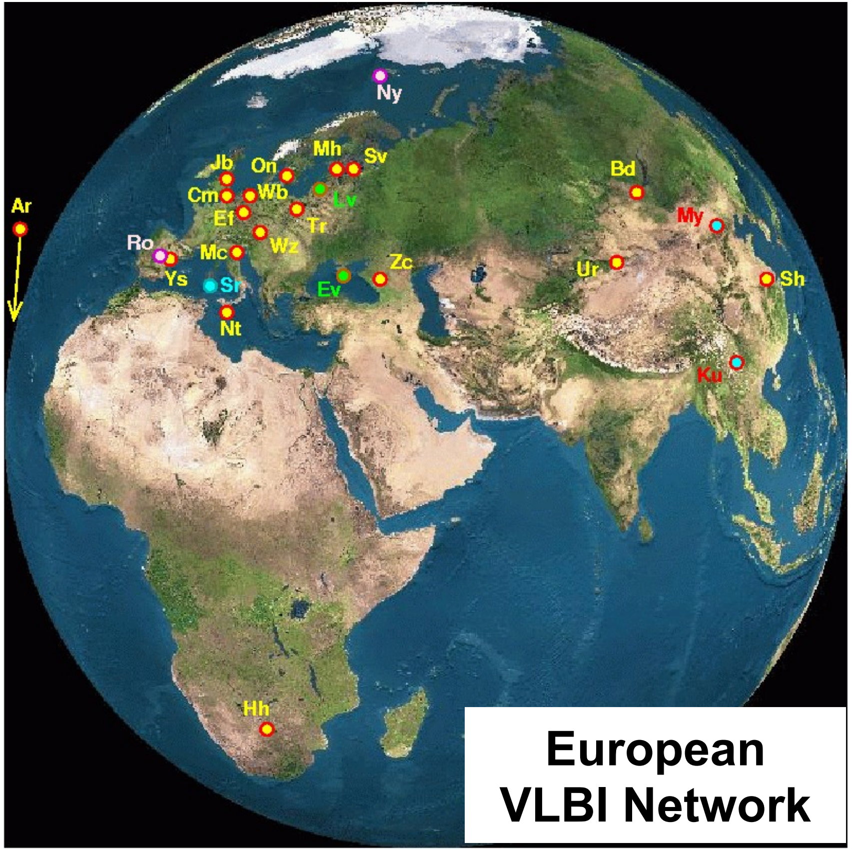
a.k.a. point spread function

Sidelobes!

Measure of performance of telescope

Very Long Baseline Interferometry

Very Long Baseline Array



European VLBI Network

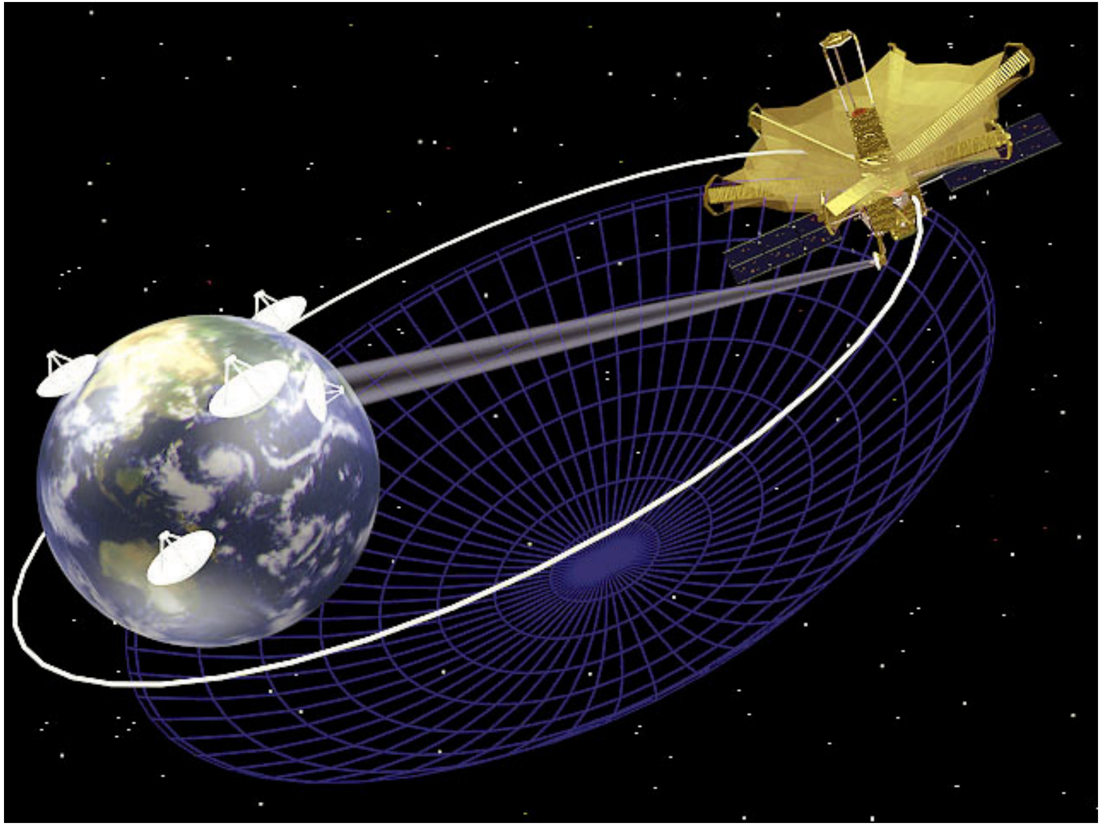
Space-based Interferometry

How Small Can Radio Sources Be?

Space-based Interferometry

- **By mid-1970s, already clear that some radio sources still unresolved on terrestrial baselines**
- **Heuristically, if source too small, energy density not enough to be visible to terrestrial radio interferometers?**
  - **A.k.a. no free lunch theorem**
    - **As synthetic apertures, interferometers also limited to observing bright sources, because telescope with lots of holes**
  - **Inverse Compton catastrophe**

VLBI Space Observatory Program (VSOP) / HALCA



JAXA-led
8 m-diameter space-based antenna

- ➢ **Some sources still have point-like or unresolved components, implies physics about central engines**
  - **Coherent or Doppler-beamed emitters**

RadioAstron

Roscosmos-led 10 m-diameter space-based antenna

- **Baselines comparable to Earth-Moon distance**

Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging

Space-based Interferometry

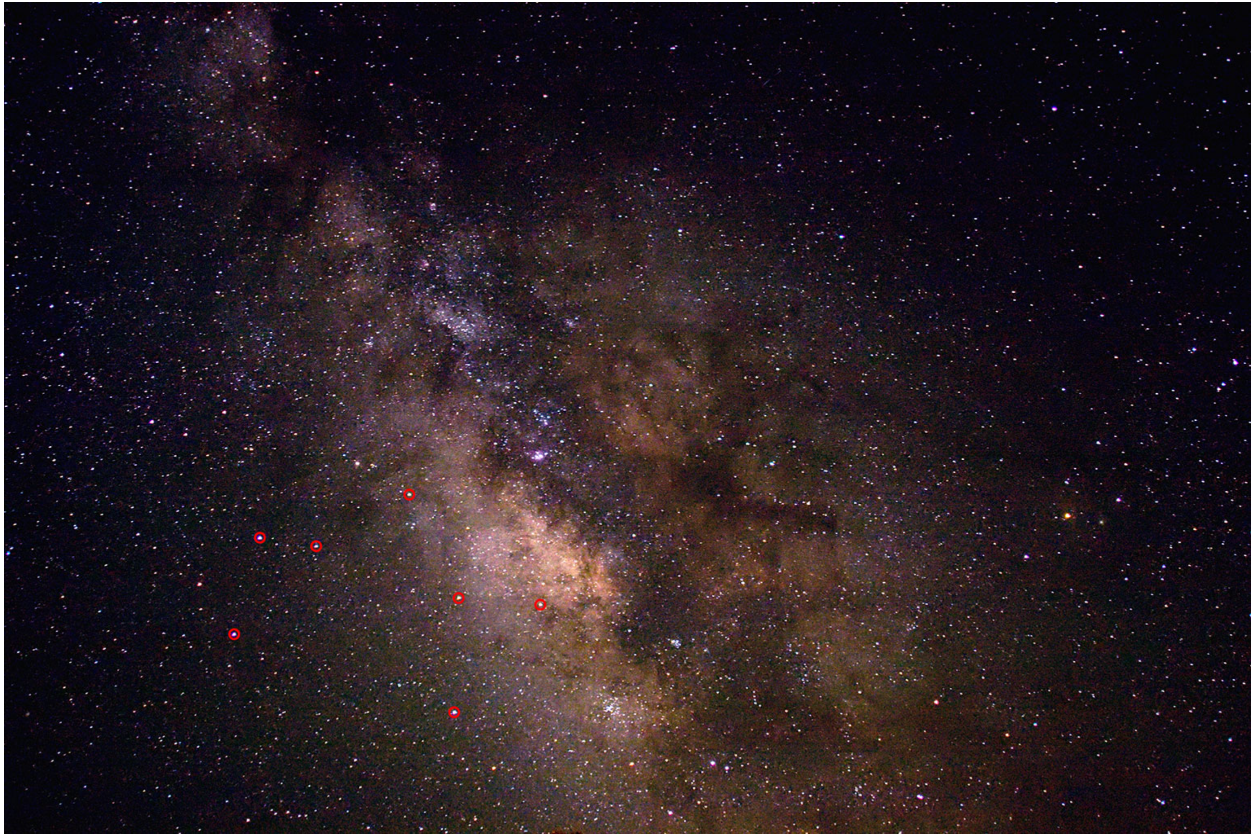
- **In Einstein's General Relativity, black hole is volume disconnected from rest of Universe**
- **Event horizon is boundary between inside black hole and rest of Universe**

  Schwarzchild radius

  For Sun, $R_s \cong 3$ km

$$R_g = R_s \equiv \frac{2GM}{c^2}$$

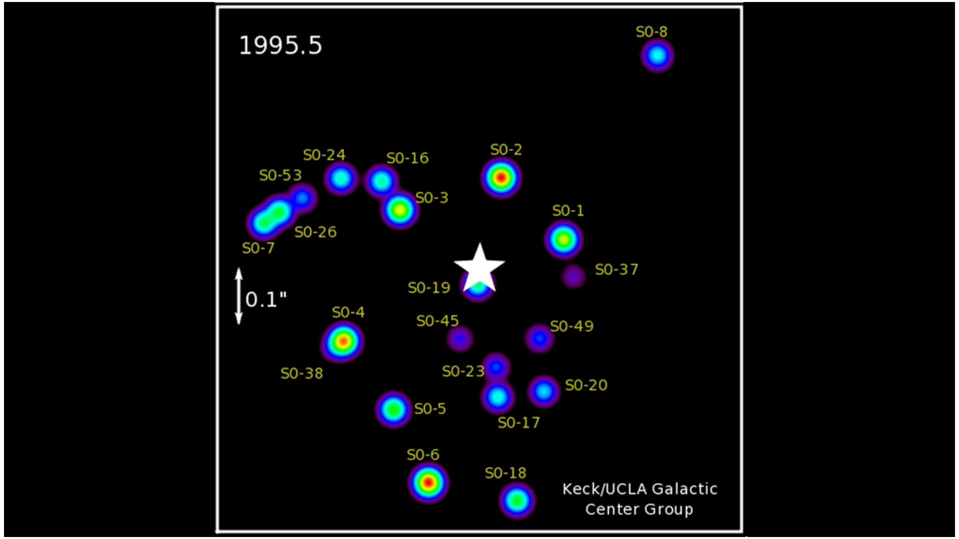
Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging



Credit: Moondigger

Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging

Space-based Interferometry



$$2R_g/D_{GC} = \sin \ell \sim \ell$$

- $R_g \sim 12 \times 10^6$ km
- $D_{GC} \sim 8000$ pc ($\sim 2.5 \times 10^{17}$ km $\sim$ 26,000 light years)

➢ $\ell \sim 9.7 \times 10^{-11}$ radians ~ 20 microarcseconds

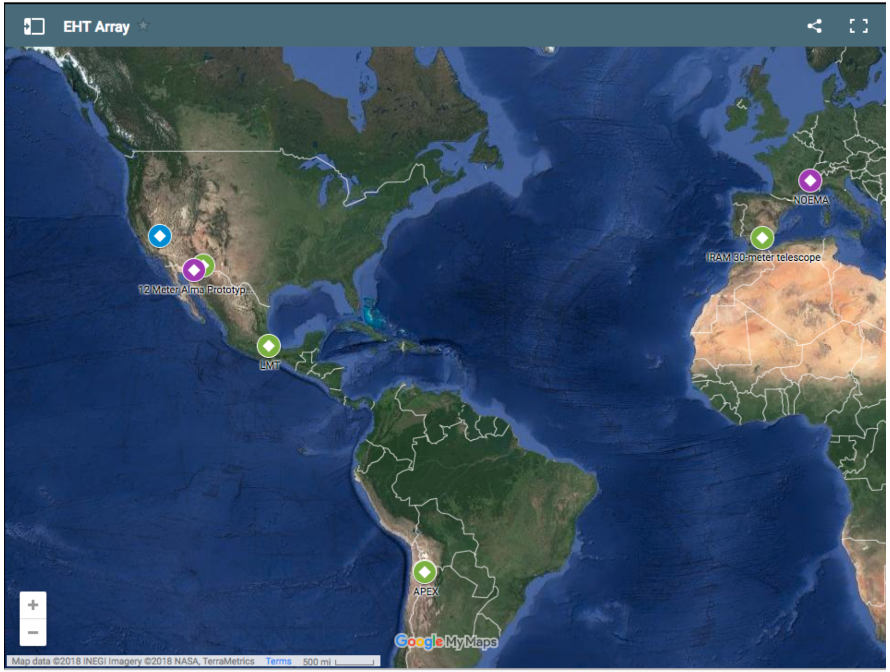
UCLA Galactic Center Group
W.M. Keck Observatory Laser Team

Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging

Space-based Interferometry

Need ~ 10 microarcsecond resolution

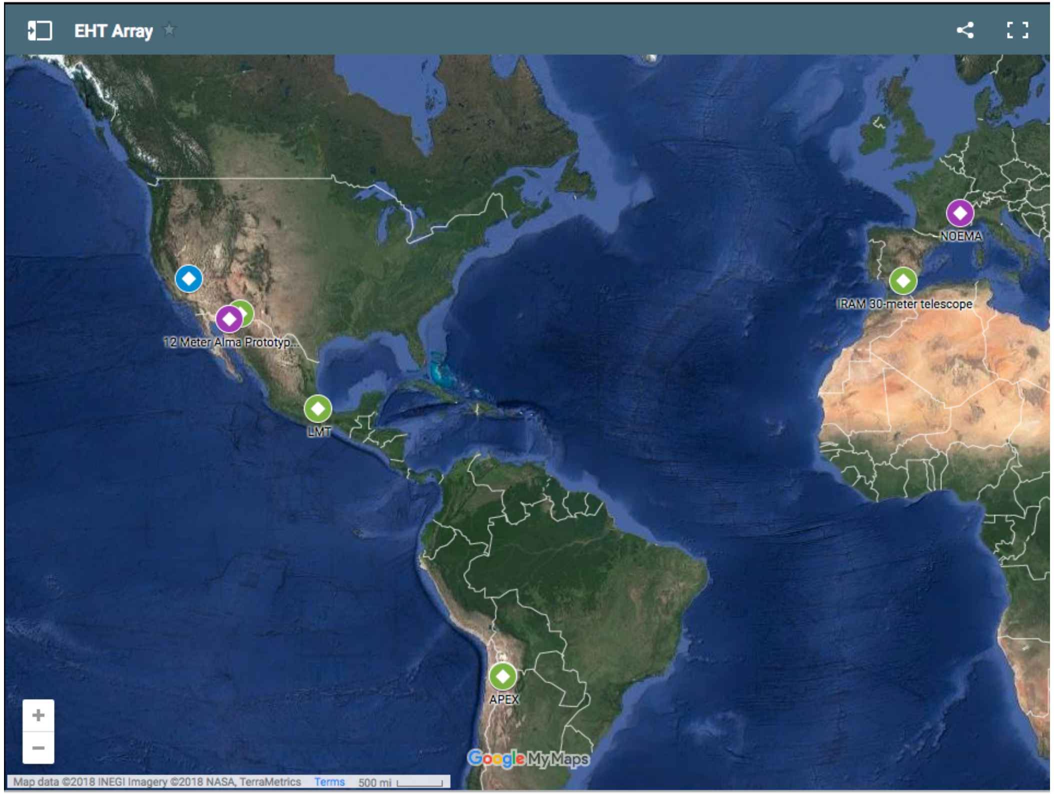
- **Choose λ ~ 0.13 cm**
- **b ~ 10,000 km**
- **Event Horizon Telescope = Earth-scale telescope to image nearby black hole event horizons**
  - **See April 10 press release**



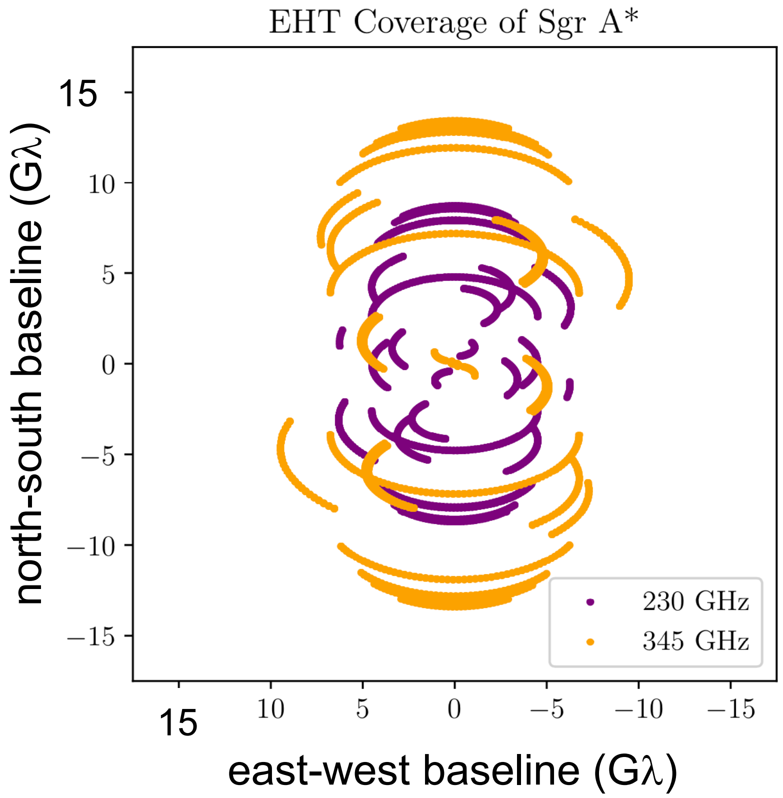
Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging

Space-based Interferometry

Nominal Event Horizon Telescope is extremely sparse array



Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging



EHT is sparse array

- **Many "holes" in synthetic aperture**

  … or many holes in *u-v* plane or Fourier plane

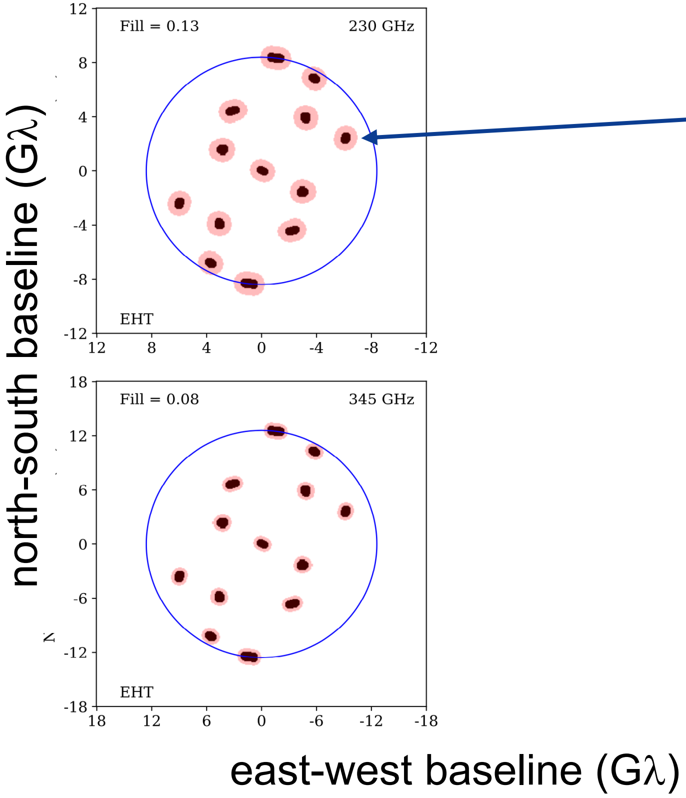
- **Earth-rotation synthesis**

  1 rotation = 24 hr

➢ **Any way to fill these u-v plane holes?**

Palumbo et al.

Black Hole Event Horizon Imaging



230 GHz

ground-ground baselines

space-ground baselines

345 GHz

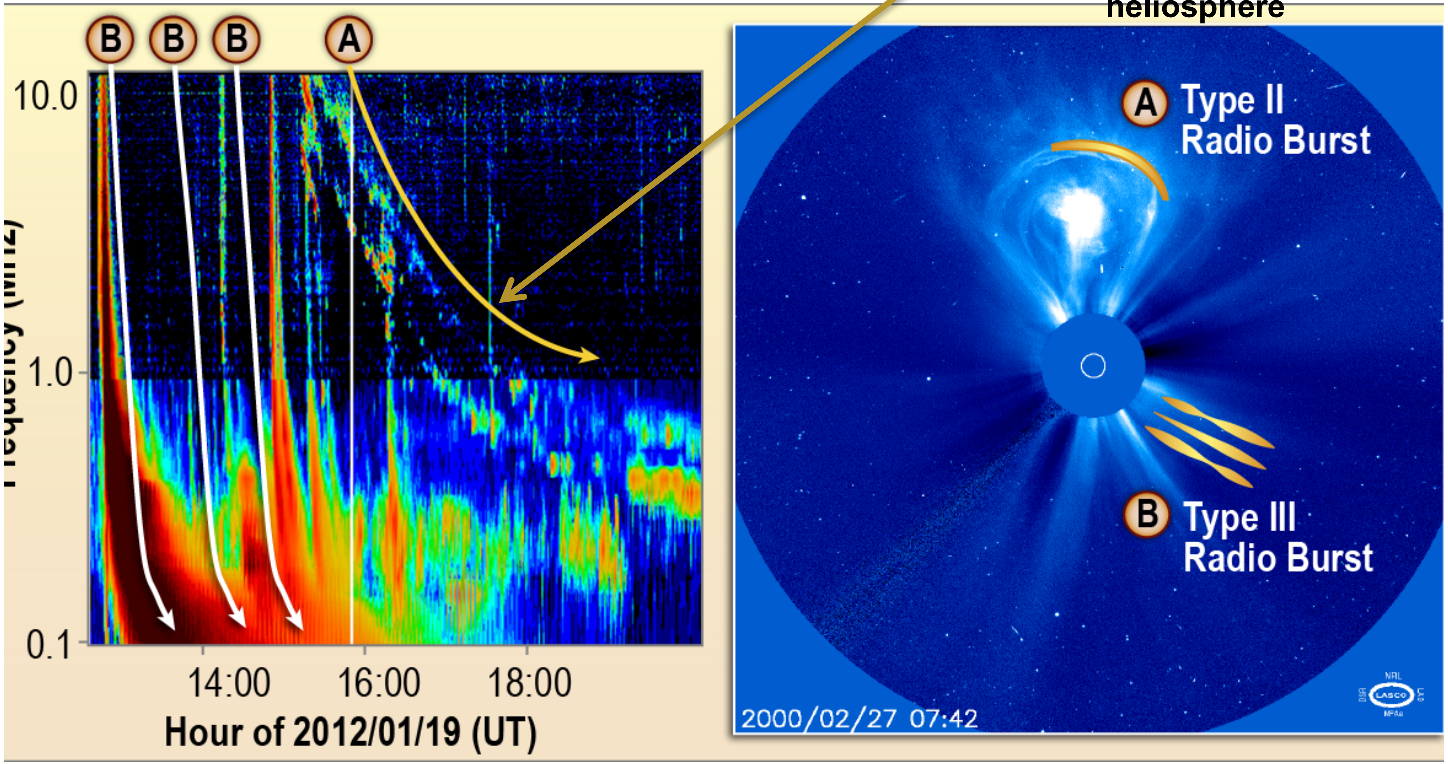
- **Spacecraft in low-Earth orbit (LEO) has 90 minute orbital period**
- **Antenna on LEO spacecraft would fill *u-v* plane dramatically!**

Palumbo et al.

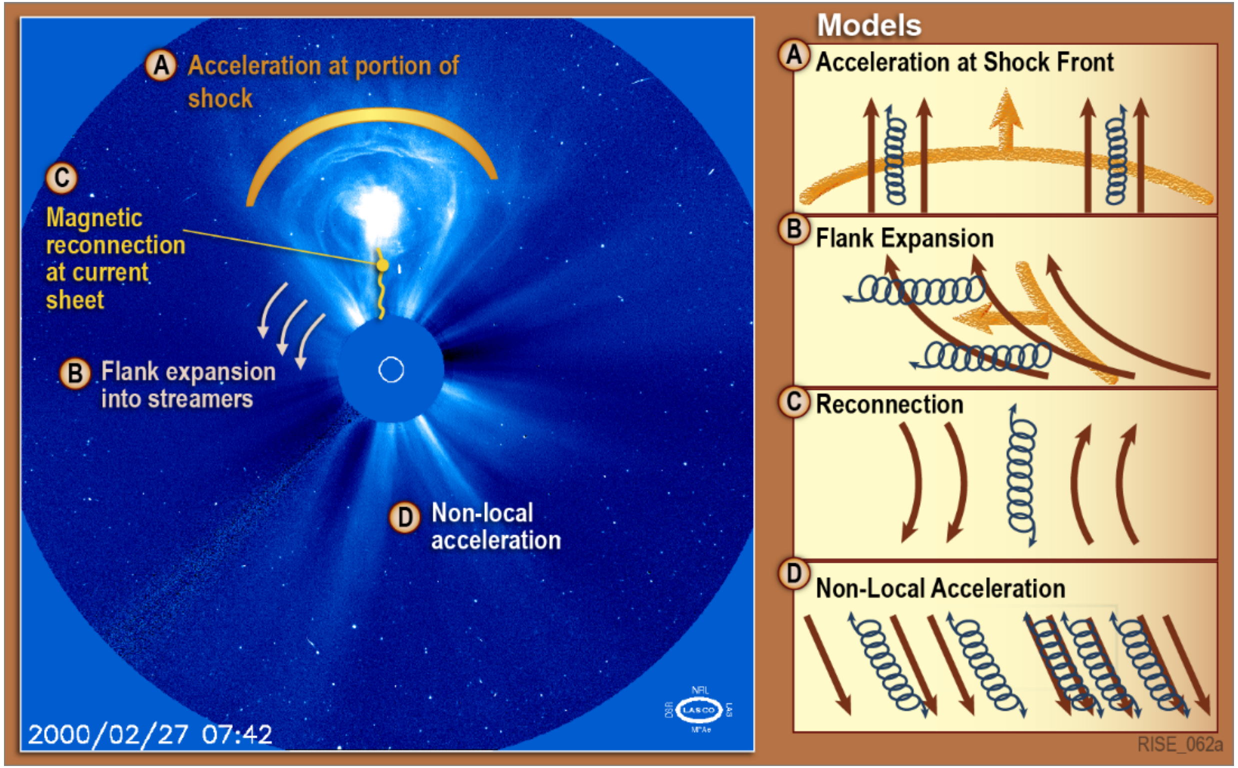
Solar Radio Bursts

Type II and III

Slowly descending in frequency as coronal mass ejections expand into heliosphere



Classes of Models for Ion and Electron Acceleration by CMEs

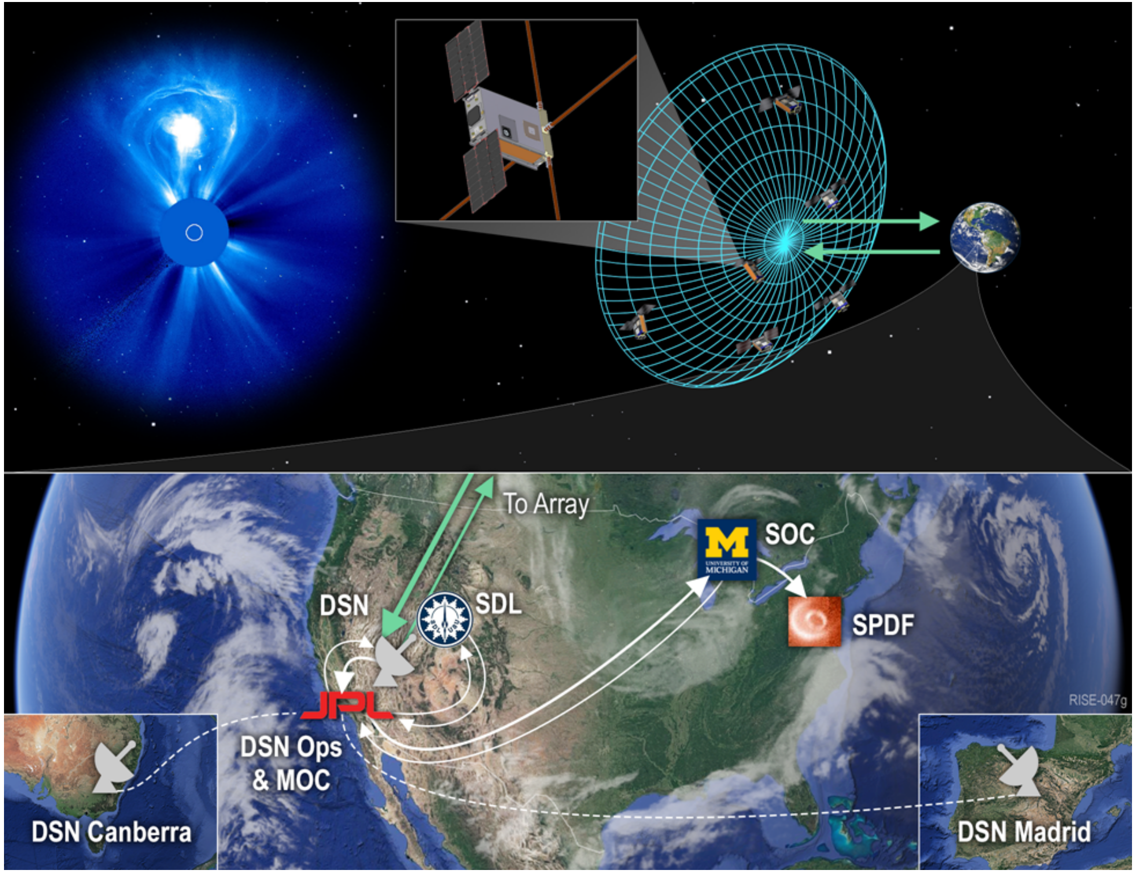


(A) Shock and compression acceleration in front of CME as it expands into corona

(B) Shock and compression acceleration on flanks as CME expands laterally into quiet streamers

(C) Magnetic reconnection at current sheets behind the ejecta

(D) Non-local acceleration as plasma is diverted and compressed by expanding filament



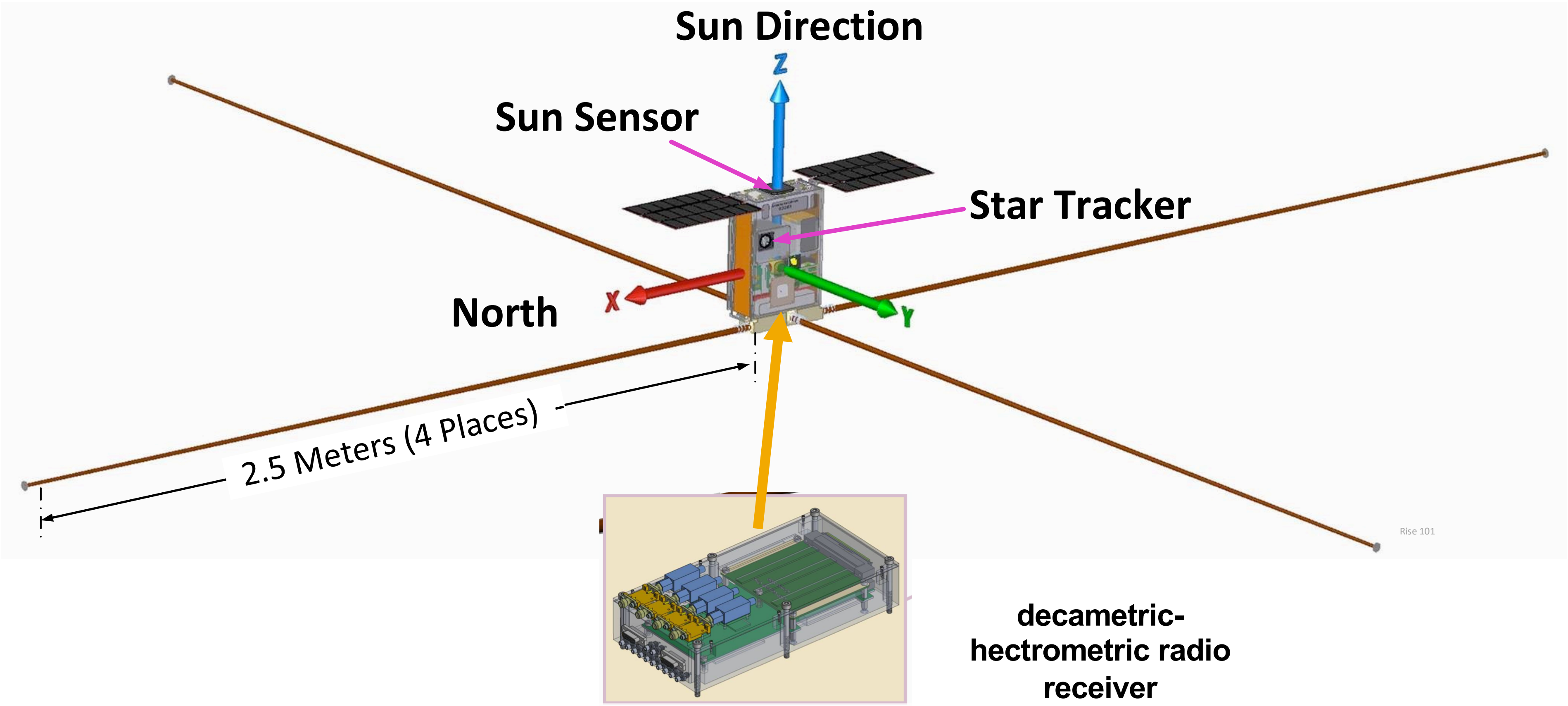
SunRISE

- **First full interferometer in space, first decametric-hectometric (DH) imaging**
- **Loose formation of six 6U form factor smallsats in approximate 10 km sphere**
- **GEO Plus Orbit (25 hr orbit period)**
- **Radio receiver (0.1 MHz – 20 MHz) with crossed 5 m dipole antennas**
- **Relative position knowledge to within 3 m, timing to nanoseconds**

➢ **Need access to space because Earth's ionosphere is opaque!**

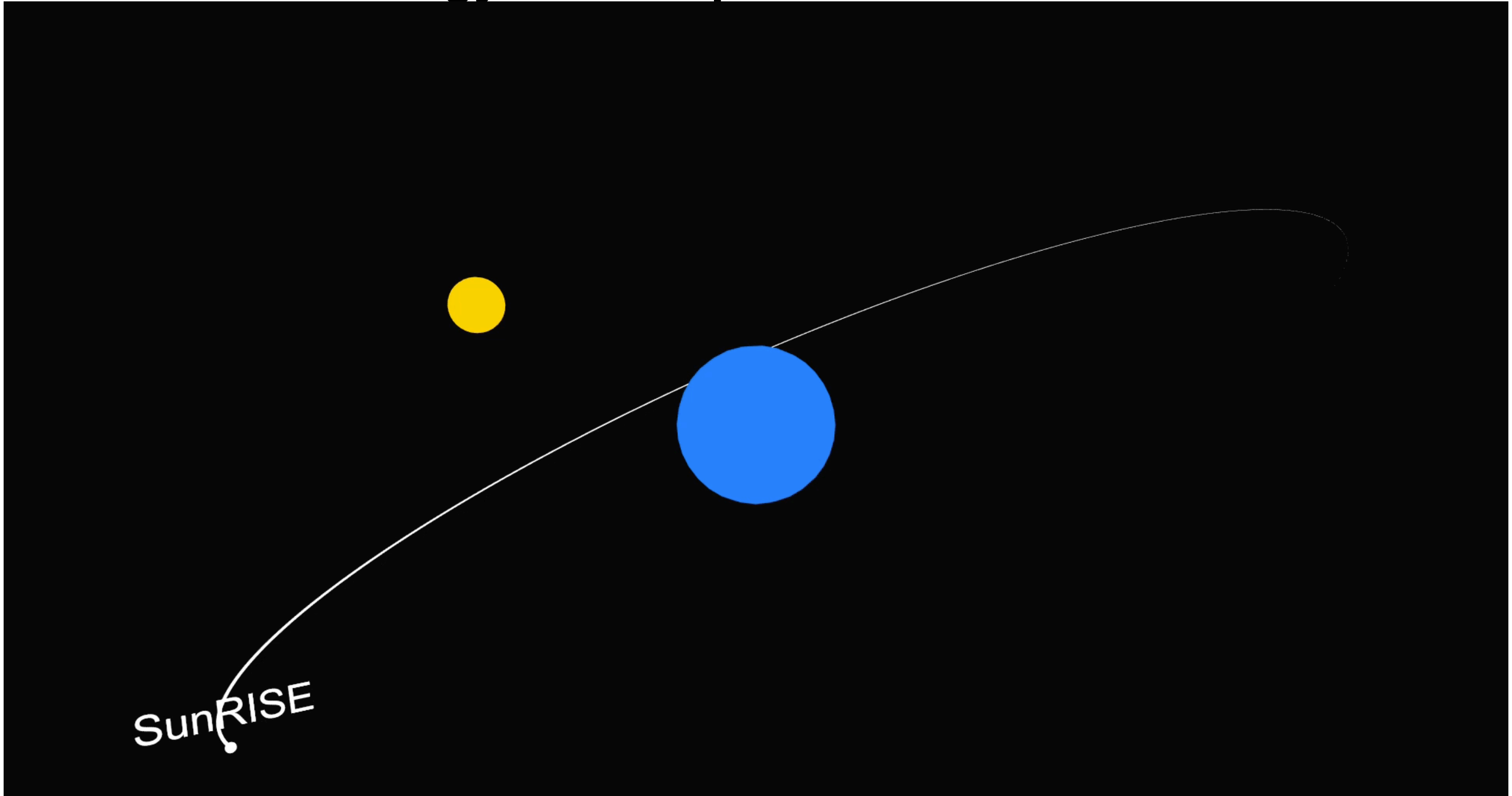
➢ **If selected, notional launch in 2023**

SunRISE Spacecraft and Science Instrument



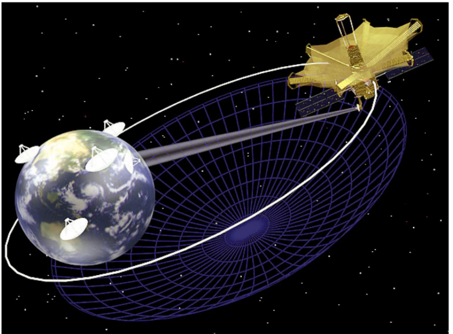
decametric-hectrometric radio receiver

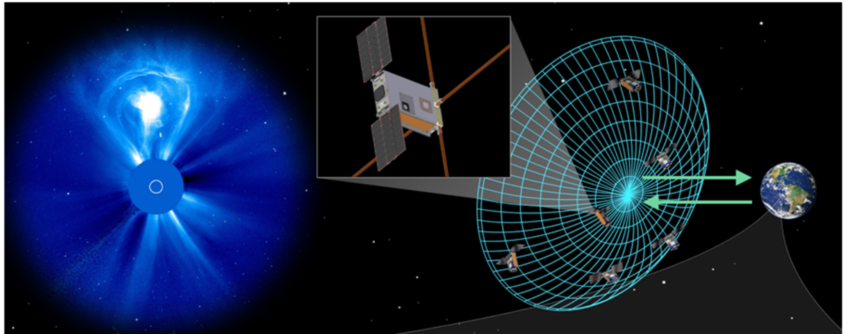
SunRISE Orbitology and *u-v* plane



Summary

- **High angular resolution imaging demands large apertures**
- **Interferometry is powerful (only) way to synthesize large apertures**
  - **Depends on relative antenna separations, knowledge not control**
- **Exciting future space possibilities for opening new windows, peering at black holes in new ways**





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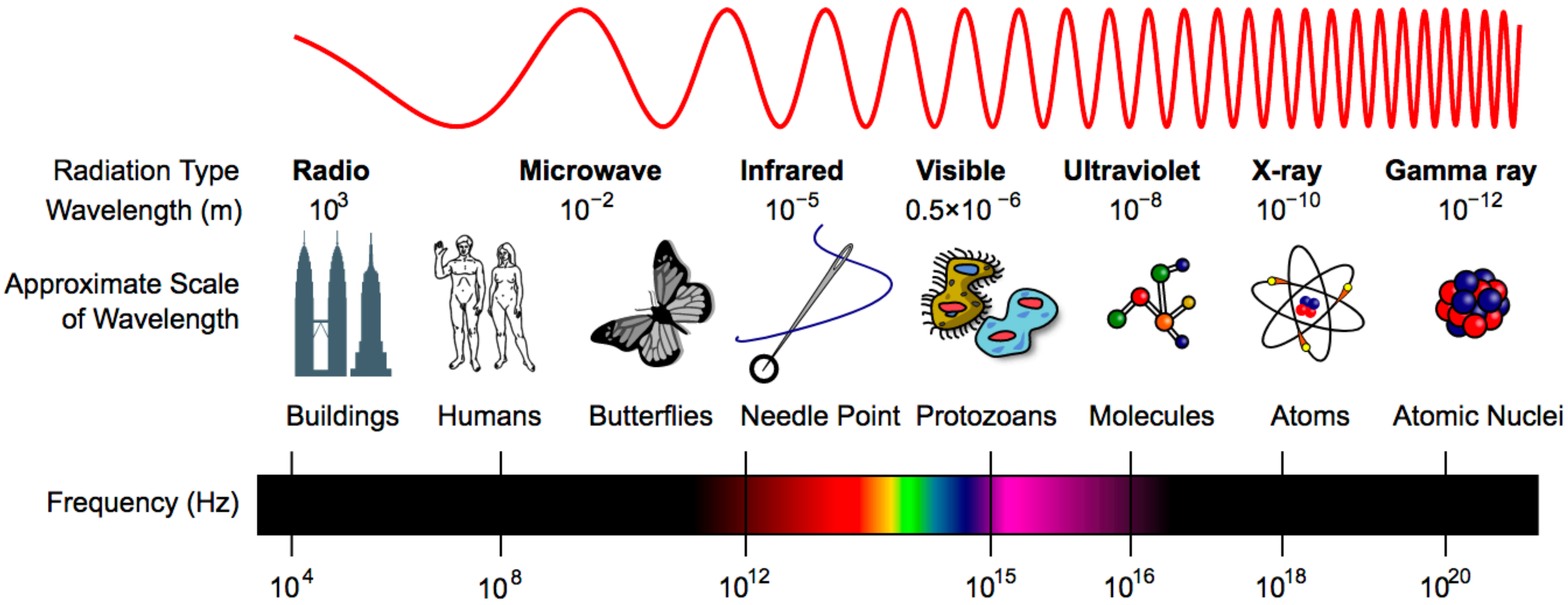
Electromagnetic Spectrum



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